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"THE QUEEN OF HEARTS"

From Photo by H. C. SHELLEY.



ADA REEVE AT THE AGE OF 4.

Miss Ada Reeve at Work

ILLUSTRATED BY PHOTOGRAPHS.

BY all true lovers of "burlesque," in the modern acceptance of the term, the reappearance of Miss Ada Reeve upon the London stage some few months ago, after an absence of about two years in Australia, was hailed with enthusiasm. An actress for this class of work who is endowed by nature with the requisite amount of good appearance, and has in addition youth, talent, and above all a sense of humour, is not to be found every day. Many have good looks, some have youth, but very few have either of the other necessary qualifications. There are certain drolls who take advantage of personal peculiarities, either of figure, voice or gesture, to raise a laugh successfully; they cannot however, be recognised as humourists in the true sense of the term. Of our comedy actresses several can be really funny without going to the length of

making themselves grotesque; but upon the light musical stage we cannot recollect any one in recent years, with the exception of Miss Florence St. John, and of course Miss Nellie Farren, who could be genuinely amusing without having recourse to absolute caricature. Miss Reeve is, however, the brilliant exception to this rather depressing rule. Naturally gifted with a charming appearance, an expressive face, a pretty, flexible voice, and a most fascinating manner, she has come to be, and will we hope long remain, the reigning queen of burlesque in London.

Belonging to a theatrical family, she has had the advantage of a thorough stage training from her very earliest years, and now, at about the age at which other young ladies are contemplating their debut on the stage as Juliet, or in some other equally unassuming rôle, she has reached the summit of

her branch of the theatrical profession. Her father was a well-known provincial actor, and her mother was at the time of their marriage, an actress. Their daughter may therefore without exaggeration be said to have been cradled in the theatre, and it is small wonder that the work comes to her almost as a second nature. When she tells you how thoroughly she enjoys acting you find no difficulty in believing her; it would be quite impossible for her to have such an entirely spontaneous manner upon the stage if it were otherwise. Though her theatrical career already covers a period of several years she has not, after all, a very great deal to tell about it. Her first appearance was made as Little Willie Carlisle in "East Lynne," the play that has brought more tears to the eyes of sympathetic audiences, and more money to the pockets of provincial managers than, we believe, any other. She had then reached the ripe age of six, the company with which she appeared being that of the well-known actor Mr. Frederick Wright, senior, who is himself the father of a talented family some of whom, with Mr. Huntley Wright at their head, have since taken high places on the burlesque stage. It was in a very different line of business they were being trained, however, at this time, though no doubt the schooling these young persons and little Ada Reeve then went through has been of inestimable value to them in later life. Whether the latter has ever had any desire to soar to the dizzy heights of the more flamboyant realms of the drama we do not know, but at any rate she has not, up to now, had any opportunity as far as we know of exercising such a bent if it exists. Her early début was followed by some years of touring, a succession of children's parts, mostly in sensational drama, being undertaken by the youthful player. At the age of eight she first appeared in pantomime at the Pavillion Theatre, Mile End, her small person being disfigured into the likeness of the Old Man of the Sea in "Sindbad the Sailor," Miss Bessie Bonehill undertaking the part of the great naval hero himself. In addition to her reputation as an actress she soon made a name for herself as a panto-

mimist, and this engagement was followed by a regular series, one or other of the provincial or suburban houses claiming the services of the little artist every Christmas.

About the last of the childish parts she played was that of the Italian boy with Miss Fannie Leslie's touring company in "Jack in the Box." In this character she was pronounced by the critics very successful, and continued playing it for some very considerable time. It was at about the date of the expiration of this engagement that it became rather perplexing to know in what manner it would be best for the young actress to employ her talents. The usual child part in a play is that of a small brat with a lisp, and for this type of character she was getting too tall, while she was not yet sufficiently grown up to impersonate even that most abominable of stage conventions,—an *ingénue*, much less a distressed or designing heroine. There were, however, a lot of little brothers and sisters at home to be thought of, so that she could not remain idle, but it was exceedingly difficult to know where to place her. In this quandary the happy inspiration of allowing her to continue her artistic probation in the music-halls was eagerly seized.

Then followed, according to Miss Reeve's own account, what was for a short time one of the most disappointing periods of her life. It may be that her estimate of what was the extent of her powers at this time is not sufficiently high; but, as we had not the pleasure of seeing her then, we are not in a position to form an opinion for ourselves, and must take the actress at her own rather modest valuation. An admirable dancer, possessed of a clear, if not a large voice, and, with some years of excellent stage training at her back, it might be imagined that any difficulties with which she would have to contend in appearing as a variety artist were for the most part overcome before the outset of this part of her career. This she says was not altogether the case. Her début in the music-halls was made at Gatti's at Charing Cross—"the Arches" as it is called by its frequenters on account of

its being built underneath the London Chatham and Dover Railway Station. On the very same stage many another performer who has since risen to affluence and renown has for the first time faced the footlights, and it would have been small blame to little Miss Reeve if she had thought she was going to bound at once into the position of a popular favourite. But conceit is not part of her nature, so she was saved a slight disappointment which might otherwise have damped her courage. Though far from being a failure, her new calling was not, by her own account, quite as easy to her as might have been expected after her somewhat lengthy career as a child actress. Instead of its all being of service to her, she very soon found out that there was a great deal of her theatrical training which she would have to unlearn before she could hope to make a great name for herself in the halls. Her method was not sufficiently self-assertive, and though her efforts were pronounced "very nice" and "very pretty" there was a lack of enthusiasm in those who praised her which soon obtruded itself upon the notice of the young lady. This sort of thing could never be tolerated for a moment by such an aspiring soul, and in a very short time she was hard at work ridding herself of such tricks as seemed most detrimental to her performance. Instead of depressing her this task seems to have added more zest to her efforts, and before long she found she was earning fresh laurels. Though the commencement of a music-hall career, as indeed that of any other, must necessarily be rather up-hill work, even after the first difficulties are overcome, the genius of the young artist soon began to make itself apparent, and there was never any lack of engagements.

It was not till two or three years after she took to the music-halls that her first really great success was made. This was with a song of the hoyden type, with the refrain, "What do I care!" which immediately took the music-hall audiences by storm. It was an impersonation that had not been given before with any resemblance to life, and it has certainly not been

excelled since. Though the song itself is not of any unusual merit, the irresistible abandon of the singer, and her manifest enjoyment of the performance, carried the audience with her. Her eyes sparkled with fun, her laugh was mischief personified, and you felt she really did not care one button for the authority of any one on this earth. One has often seen this sort of thing



ADA REEVE AT THE AGE OF 16.

From Photo by THE LONDON STEREOSCOPIC CO.

entirely spoiled by the self-consciousness of the performer, but there was no suspicion of the sort here, the whole being a genuine triumph. So popular was the catherine-wheel with which she made her exit that we believe, were she to appear in the East End even now, no matter if it was in an entirely different sort of impersonation, she would be greeted with shouts of "Over, Ada!" for the sake of old times. A recent revival of the song at the Palace Theatre shows that Miss Reeve's rendering has

lost none of its charm during the five or six years since we last had the pleasure of listening to it.

We recollect another song of the same type as that just described, which was, we think, its contemporary, and related the adventures of a young lady in the absence of her papa and mamma, in giving which the artist was equally happy. Other highly successful songs followed, of which "I'm a little too young to know" was probably the best; but it is the two hoyden songs which somehow seem the most firmly impressed of our early recollections of the performer.

After her reputation was once thus firmly established everything went merrily. Her services were soon at a premium for pantomime as well as for music-hall, and the manager who could secure them considered himself lucky. An engagement in New York was accepted about this time, and though, like all true artists, horribly nervous when she made her first appearance before the American public, "What do I care!" triumphed on the other side of the Atlantic as it had done here, and the young artist had no reason to regret her visit to the States. The fact that she is still affectionately remembered there is evidenced by the tempting offers she has lately received to pay them another visit, and the enormous salary that is offered her as an inducement to do so.

Brilliantly successful as she was at the music-halls, one always felt that it was for the theatre Miss Reeve was designed by Providence. She has few equals on the variety stage, still fewer superiors, but at the theatre she is at present without a rival. It hardly came as a surprise, therefore, when in the summer of 1894 it was announced that she had been engaged by Mr. George Edwards for the Gaiety Theatre. As has already been said, she had only taken to the music-halls when there was no place

for her at the theatre proper, and though she had won fame and good fortune in them, she was glad to return to the regular stage. At first, it looked as if there would be some difficulties to be encountered if the engagement was accepted. The managers of the music-halls were naturally anxious not to part with one of their most popular stars. However, when they had announced their intention of keeping her strictly to the terms of her contracts, and had drawn themselves out in full array of battle, it was announced, to their dismay, that the young lady was still a minor, and that the contracts themselves were only so much waste paper. This being



ADA REEVE AT THE AGE OF 17.

From Photo by VERNON KAYE.

so, the minor herself was able to trip off to the Gaiety with a light heart, leaving her opponents entirely discomfited. After a short preliminary tour with Mr. Edwards's London company in the burlesque of "Don Juan," Miss Reeve made her appearance at the Gaiety in the title rôle of "The Shop Girl" on its original production. But although she was leading lady, the part as originally written did not give the actress full scope for a display of her talents. Whenever a chance was afforded her, notably in the duet over the perambulator, her performance stood out as one of great excellence; but "Bessie Brent" was, after all, but the shadow of a character, which did not afford a real opportunity to any one of the many ladies who afterwards played it. Though no doubt the skill of the artist would soon have overcome these initial difficulties, this was not to be. The part soon had to be relinquished on account of a pantomime engagement which could not be avoided, but which she was not, after all, able to fulfil to the end on account of illness. This illness prevented her resuming her place at the Gaiety, when the run of the pantomime was over, so the "Shop Girl" had to find other interpreters for the remainder of her successful career. When she was well enough to re-

appear, Miss Reeve was engaged to take the part of "The Countess Acacia," in an attempt that was being made to bolster up the ill-fated "Baron Golosh" at the Duke of York's Theatre. The piece was, however, in such a moribund condition when she joined the company that even her vivacity could not succeed in giving it fresh life. After a week or so, difficulties arose with the management, the "Countess Acacia" threw up her part, and, we believe precisely two nights afterwards, the theatre closed its

that the actress got a real chance of distinguishing herself in a part that afforded her any adequate scope for a display of her powers. The character of Mademoiselle Julie Bonbon in "The Gay Parisienne" gave her an opportunity of showing what stuff she was made of. It proved to be, to quote the late Mrs. Keeley, "not stuff, but silk." When she was first informed that she would have to play the part entirely in broken English, it is small wonder that the intelligence was rather a shock



ADA REEVE AT THE AGE OF 19.

From Photo by DRAYCOTT, Birmingham.

doors. In the following autumn, that is the autumn of 1895, an engagement was accepted to appear at the Criterion as the *café chantant* singer in "All Abroad," which was not a very brilliant piece, but had a successful run. In this, Miss Reeve managed to make a hit with a rather indifferent song, "The Business Girl," which save for her treatment of it would in all probability have passed unnoticed, but as in the end the great attraction of the performance.

It was not till the spring of 1896

to the actress. Indeed, she says she told the management that she could not, but only received the reply that she must, and accordingly did with great *aplomb*. Her knowledge of French is, she owns, decidedly limited, which must have made the task doubly difficult to her, but she came through the ordeal with such flying colours that it led to her being engaged for a similar part in "Milord Sir Smith" on her return to England at the end of last year. The wisdom of the management in select-

ing Miss Reeve to play the "Gay Parisienne" was amply proved by her success in the part. The brilliancy and *verve* of her acting, singing, and dancing were of immense value to the piece, and undoubtedly one of the main reasons of its prosperity. The character required a certain style, which its exponent most admirably supplied. Where another actress would have ruined her effects by too much grimacing and action Miss Reeve was singularly happy in giving the requisite amount of expression and movement without for a moment overstepping the mark. The whole performance was marked by a vivacity which seemed boundless, but was, nevertheless, kept well within the line until the part required that it should have full fling. Unfortunately, for herself and for the management, after she had been playing this character for over a year a breakdown in her health again forced the artist to give up acting for a time. It was as a remedy for this illness that a sea voyage was ordered, and a trip to Australia was decided on. This tour, which was, as far as London is concerned, much too long, has only recently come to an end, and there remains very little more to be said about Miss Reeve's career. After a short time, her health having been fully restored by the difference of climate, she was again busily engaged in the pursuit of her profession. During the two years she was abroad a round of parts was played, which included "The Gay Parisienne," "The French Maid," and others, as well as that of principal boy in the Melbourne pantomime. The whole tour was a great success from beginning to end, and the artist cannot speak too highly of Australian audiences. The people of Melbourne, she says, take longer to get to like you than those of Sydney, but when you have once established yourself in their affections they cannot have too much of you. The Sydney audiences, on the other hand, though their admiration is more quickly and easily secured, have the reputation of being fickle. As far as the young actress herself was concerned she had only the report of others to rely on—for her, Sydney had as lasting a welcome as Melbourne.

When it was at length decided that she should return to England, though she was, in spite of her successes elsewhere, nothing loth to do so, Miss Reeve was, she says, rather nervous lest she should find that the London public had forgotten her during her long absence. This doubt must have been short-lived, for before she had set foot on shore offers of engagements were beginning to be deluged upon her. She was at once secured for a special "turn" at the Palace Theatre, a thing which is not to be scoffed at; and when she found that her services were also required to play leading lady with Mr. Arthur Roberts, the actress must have begun to realise that her fears that she might be over-looked were groundless. The praises with which she was greeted on her reappearance, by both press and public, are still fresh in every one's memory. We never recollect a more unanimous burst of applause from the newspapers. Though they were nearly all agreed in damning the piece in which she appeared, no one had anything but praise for the artist—praise, too, that was as sincere as it was general. She had gone away the most promising actress on the burlesque stage, she came back to us with the promise more than fulfilled.

Her success is not in the least to be wondered at. There is a delicacy about her style that is extremely rare with English actresses, and, indeed, when one seeks for any one with whom to compare her, one has to go across the Channel for an example. She has a lightness of touch which is seldom to be found even among actresses of higher comedy, and is hardly ever to be discovered on the frivolous musical stage.

When we say she must be compared with French artists, we do not mean, of course, the artists of the music-halls. She has nothing in common with the inanities of an Anna Held or a Liane de Vries, or with the clever though rather nauseous methods of Yvette Guilbert. Her style is more akin to that of a Chaumont or Judic than to that of any artist of to-day. She is vivacity personified; but her exuberance of spirits is not thrust upon you. Every

movement of the eyelids, every inflection of the voice means something. She is all go and sparkle, but never noisy, and though she can give a dash of the gutter-snipe at times, which is irresistible, she gives only that spice of vulgarity which is an additional charm to an actress of her calibre.

It has been said with justice that to Miss Reeve should fall the place at our

impossible. It is useless to seek for an affinity which does not exist; there is, in fact, nothing in common between them. With Nellie Farren, who always played burlesque boys, it was the humour of the Cockney, of the street Arab that triumphed. It would be quite impossible to replace her. On her retirement from the stage the particular rôle in which she excelled



ADA REEVE, PRESENT DAY, IN "MILORD SIR SMITH."

From Photo by ALFRED ELLIS.

theatres vacated by Miss Nellie Farren. Though we think there is no one better fitted for the position, it must not be imagined that the young actress would fill it, or attempt to fill it, by using the same means as her predecessors. Their methods run in entirely different grooves. It has been sought to compare them; but to try to do so is to attempt the

ceased to exist. She was, in fact, an actress of old-fashioned travesty, who by dint of her own genius alone had kept alive a type of piece which would otherwise have become extinct long before. With her it was to the last brilliantly successful, her marvellous vitality never allowed it to flag, and had she continued to act up to the present

time it would be the same. But, unfortunately, she has not been able to, and could she come back to us now, after the time which has elapsed her most inspired performance—though we hardly like to say it—would now seem a little old-fashioned—a trifle worn. And this would be not because the actress had changed one whit, but because audiences have changed entirely, and require something of an altogether different kind. With Ada Reeve it is quite another thing—to her travesty is unknown. There is no turning into ridicule what has been done in the past ; she does not even amuse us with an echo of to-day, but with a hint of to-morrow. She does not satirise what we already know, but sets us laughing at something new which we did not expect—she is, in fact, essentially modern. It is impossible to take one's eyes off the

almost fragile-looking girl as she acts, dances, and sings with all her heart and all her body ; one is charmed not only by the rare gift of absolute union of voice and gesture, but by an element of surprise in all she does. It is by this that the public has been captured, and the public is right. At times with Ada Reeve the ridiculous touches the sublime, and by something quite indescribable burlesque becomes fine art. She is an artist, too, who is in touch with any audience, and can produce an infinity of effects on their feelings. She retains her hold on her hearers by her constant good-humour, which is not only apparent but real, and by the personal amusement she takes in amusing them. In short she is that very exceptional being—a really fine artist, and for what she attempts has no equal at our theatres to-day.





HER FLIGHT

In the
WAR BALLOON.

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WRITTEN BY H. PARK BOWDEN. ILLUSTRATED BY G. F. DODSHON

THE iced claret was deliciously cooling, and as he took deep draughts of the beverage, Captain Gary's heated face began to regain its usual complacency.

"There wasn't a breath of air stirring is afternoon, even up in my exalted position!" he remarked, glancing from a window of the inn parlour at a huge herical form, the captive balloon which was under his management during the reconnoissance of the little Canadian city, now completely invested by the American forces.

"Could you glean anything fresh?" asked the dark-haired waitress. She put the question in a tone of easy interest, but the glance she turned on him was charged with keenest anxiety.

"No, my pretty, they keep steadily pairing the mischief our shells worked," he answered, withdrawing his gaze from the balloon and watching her with appreciative eyes. She was a striking-looking girl, tall and slender in figure, with a lissom daintiness of bearing. Her face was of rare brunette beauty, delicately yet firmly moulded, and revealing a self-reliance and reserve beyond her years and station, characteristics that whetted the captain's admiration to a dangerous point.

"Was that Major Kemp in the car with you?" she asked, beginning to peel a lemon.

"Yes, sweating and puffing like a grampus! But he has finished his mapping now—and to some purpose too; the plans have enabled General Hammond to put his finger right on the weak spot in their works."

"Then I suppose he will soon make an attack on that point?"

"Just so, there's nothing to be gained by delay, and a good deal to be lost. This fever is working awful havoc among our men."

"Poor fellows, how wretched it must be for them!" she exclaimed with profound pity, adding passionately; "how glad I shall be when all this is ended!"

"Well, the beginning of the end is pretty near, I guess—as near as to-morrow night!"

"To-morrow night?" she repeated, turning pale to the lips; "is the attack to be made then?"

He nodded gaily.

"And if a certain little stratagem I have suggested to old Hammond works well, the city will soon be in our hands!"

"A stratagem of yours—why, how clever you must be! Do tell me all about it!" she exclaimed with well-simulated admiration.

"You are a true daughter of Eve," he chuckled, "but it will take more than fair words to draw that from me! Give me the kiss you have so long refused me, and the secret shall be yours!" And starting to his feet, he went to her side, seized her hands in his, and bent invitingly towards her. She shook her head,

in her downbent eyes, he widely misinterpreted.

"Ay, give me a fair kiss, lip to lip, and by my soul, I'll tell you all!" he promised, bringing his face still nearer hers.

She drew her breath quickly, then suddenly raising her head, she lightly



"RELEASE ME!"

flushing and paling beneath his ardent gaze.

"No, I cannot!" she exclaimed under her breath.

"Then my lips remain locked," he said decisively.

Irresolution brought the ebbing colour back to her face in a bright wave.

"And—if I do, you give me your word of honour that you will tell me?" she said slowly, her bosom heaving with an emotion that, not seeing the expression

touched his lips with hers. At the touch he caught her in his arms, returning the kiss again and again.

"Cease—release me, or I will call Mrs. Todd!" she gasped, trying to wrench herself free.

"You little simpleton, you are trembling like a bird!" And with a short laugh he released her, and returning to his chair he lighted a fresh cigarette.

"And now, your promise," she said curtly.

He shrugged his shoulders, and sent a wreath of smoke curling to the ceiling.

"Know then, most imperious one, that to-morrow night I shall make an ascent and discharge some bombs within their northern lines; then under cover of the noise and confusion these will cause, our men will storm the weak spot near the north-west angle and no doubt will carry it before them!"

"The stratagem is worthy of you," he said, her lip curling with irrepressible scorn even while it paled to ashiness. But before he could notice her agitation he turned abruptly away, and began clearing a table at which some officers had lunched.

He smiled indolently, and observed in an aside,

"There certainly is a strong affinity between the feline and feminine natures. First the purring and velvety caress, and then the sly and sudden scratch."

This failing to provoke any repartee from her, he said peremptorily, "Drive that table alone, and tell me the meaning of that unbecoming little frown!" And as she passed near him, he caught at her hand and held her prisoner.

"I was wishing for what I shall never have, I am afraid," she said frankly.

"Faith, but you shall have it if it lies in my power!"

At his impulsive words an eager gleam lit up her eyes, and a quick flush suffused her clear, dark skin.

"Now that is a promise, Captain, and shall hold you to it," she said with an air of arch gaiety.

"Certainly, you little witch; and now what is it—not the half of my kingdom, I hope!" he laughed, squeezing the tender hand she had allowed him to detain.

"No, sir, only the half of your car! I have so often wished to make an ascent," she answered, looking down on him with a smile that would have made any man eager to do her pleasure. But he shook his head with a grimace.

"It is out of the question. I need not say how delighted I should be to fulfil your wish, my charming Cynthia, but the higher powers would never countenance such a thing."

"But the higher powers need not

know anything about it. We could make the ascent at sunrise, while they are still wrapped in slumber. I will bring a basket with me, and we will have a picnic breakfast in mid-air. Do say you will take me!"

He looked up into her flushed face with an amorous smile.

"Who could resist so sweet a pleader—not I for one, if I am court-martialled for it!" he avowed, slipping his arm round her waist. But breaking from him, she seized her tray and hastened from the room.

* * *

"The last night I shall pass here," said Cynthia to herself, as some hours later she locked herself into her little, pent-roofed bedroom. Placing the lamp on her primitive dressing-table, she went to a wooden trunk in the corner of the room and took from it some writing materials, and a small jewelled watch.

"Eleven o'clock—where shall I be this time twelve hours?" she wondered, placing it where she could note the lapse of time. "But I am glad and thankful this hateful part of mine is nearly played out. What would Basil think of me if he only knew I had touched that man's lips with mine!" And with a pained look on her face she drew from her loosened bodice the miniature portrait of a man about twenty-five. The strongly-cast features, healthily brown complexion, and earnest expression, combined to convey the impression that he was a man of fine physical and mental qualities, a man who would act fairly and squarely by all men—and women.

"O Basil, Basil, how will it end? What shall I find—you, or death?" she exclaimed under her breath, meeting with passionate yearning the straight, honest gaze of his grey eyes.

With a shivering sigh, she returned the portrait to its hiding-place; then drew a chair to the table and began to write.

"The Golden Beaker,

"Hickory Hamlet, June 28th, 1895.

"My own dear Basil:—

"If you ever receive this, it will be under circumstances that will fill you with amazement, for, all going well, I shall drop it from the balloon that has

been spying on you for the last week. But I must hasten to explain, or you will think all this anxiety has turned my brain. At the beginning of the month I heard that the American generals were blockading your brave little city, and I knew that I should not even have the comfort of hearing from you. Oh, Basil, the silence and uncertainty were intolerable, I felt that I could not remain passively at home—that I must get as near as possible to you. And then, while reading an account of how the outskirting villages were deserted and ransacked, I saw that a Yankee sutler had taken possession of an abandoned hostelry, near the American Camp. And so I saw my opportunity of getting near you, and knowing a little of how things were going: I could ruralise myself, and apply for the post of waitress. I knew my father would not hear of such a proceeding, so I told him that I was restless and unstrung and needed a turn of travelling to set me to-rights. My travelling ended here, where, under the name of Cynthia Burr, I was promptly engaged by the sutler, Silas Todd, an honest-looking man, with a motherly sort of wife.

"Before I had been here a week, your sortie took place. Shall I ever forget the horror of it, the fear that you were in the midst of that awful carnage? and then, the dread that I should find you dead or dying on that horrible field—for directly after the retreat Mrs. Todd and I hastened there with brandy, etc., and did the best we could for the poor fellows. And then I learnt from one of your wounded men that you had not been in the sortie, but had been left in charge of one of the batteries.

"Since that day I have lived in constant dread of another engagement, and now one is imminent; for this afternoon I learnt from the captain of the balloon—who, of course, takes me for a simple waitress, greatly flattered by his coarse compliments—that they are going to make a feint and real attack to-morrow, Thursday night. It is their intention to discharge bombs within your northern lines, and under cover of the noise and confusion they will storm a weak spot they have discovered—by means of the balloon—near the north-west angle. And it is my intention to try and frustrate

this mean scheme by a simple ruse. I have expressed to Captain Gary a great desire to go up in his balloon, and have befooled him into promising to make an ascent with me early to-morrow, before the officers are about. I have told him that I will pack a basket and bring with me, so that we may have breakfast in mid-air. And the wine I shall take for him, his favourite Hermitage, will be drugged. Now don't be shocked, Basil, but remember that all is fair in love and war—and both elements justify me! As soon as he is senseless, I shall slip the cable securing the balloon, and make the best use I can of the aeronautical knowledge I gleaned last year, while visiting my uncle Sherwood, who, I think you know, makes a hobby of ballooning. If only this south wind continues, I have no doubt all will go well; and even if it does change, I shall make the venture on the chance of finding a favourable current in the higher regions. When I am well over your fortifications I shall drop this letter, with a request that it may be at once taken to you or some commanding officer; and I shall also explain who I am, so that they may not fire at the balloon when I make my descent. This is my ruse for capturing the balloon and apprising you of the enemy's intentions.

"Oh, Basil, the thought that in a few hours I may once more feel your dear arms around me fills my heart with joy, and will give me courage through it all.

"And now, dear heart, good-bye.

"Yours for ever,

"LENORE D'ARCY."

"Yes, it does look rather formidable, but we have the key of the situation now, and the place is as good as in our hands!" declared Captain Gary, as from an altitude of nearly 2,000 feet he and Lenore d'Arcy directed their gaze towards the far-stretching ramparts and redoubts of the Canadian fortifications.

At the Captain's boastful assertion the girl's downbent eyes fairly blazed, but their indignant fire soon gave place to apprehensive gloom, and she slipped her hand into the pocket where she had secreted the momentous letter to her lover. If only it were safely in his hands!

Yearning for a glimpse of him, she once more raised the field-glass to her eyes. But her intent scrutiny was of no avail; she could not distinguish his well-known figure. And with aching eyes and heart she laid down the glass.

"Look, my pretty, the mist has cleared off the lake," said her companion, and turning her head southwards, she saw the sea-like expanse of Lake Ontario sparkling beneath the newly-risen sun. A few diaphanous folds of mist still lingered under the wooded bluffs of the near shore, concealing from her the stately old home from which she had gone forth so bravely on her forlorn hope.

Drawing a deep breath, she looked away to where the Thousand Isles broke up the wide sweep of waters into many a foaming rapid—the isles in whose leafy coves she and Basil had so often lingered in sweetest seclusion. The delicate lines of her lips softened into a wistful and lovely tenderness.

"A penny for your thoughts, my pensive Cynthia!"

Turning with a start, she found Captain Gary watching her curiously.

"A penny!" she repeated with light derision; "'My mind to me a kingdom is,' and you would have me betray it for a penny!"

"At least tell me this much, imperial one—is your kingdom ruled by a king, an all-conquering lover?" and he stroked his moustache with the complacent conviction that he himself held the dominion in question.

"Ask me that question this evening, and I may answer it." She spoke with an indifferent toss of her head, but her heart quailed within her. "This evening"—where would she be then?

"That promise must be duly sealed!" And in a twinkling his arm was around her and his lips pressed to hers.

With a vivid flush of disgust she wrenched herself free. Then, remembering the hateful part she had set herself to play, she said airily:

"If you don't behave yourself, sir, I shall keep you without your breakfast." And turning to her basket, she proceeded to unpack its dainty contents.

"This is a jolly little meal," he chuckled, drawing the cork of the "*Côte-*

Rôtie." "But surely you are going to join me in this," he added, seeing her help herself to some milk.

"Oh no, I couldn't fancy wine for breakfast. I hope you will approve of the dough-nuts, for they are a sample of my cooking."

"Then they are food for the gods—and faith, I shall imagine myself one, partaking of ambrosia and nectar, with charming Hebe for my cup-bearer."

"Indeed, but you mustn't expect that of me; I am much too hungry to wait on you!" she laughed, her eyes brilliant with feverish excitement as she watched him pour out the drugged "nectar."

"To Hebe's starry eyes!" he toasted, and tossed off the wine with gusto.

Every nerve now strung to the highest pitch, she buttered a roll and made an attempt to eat.

Presently she saw with relief that a heavy drowsiness was replacing the admiring boldness of his glances. A few minutes later, muttering something about his head being as heavy as a cannon-ball, he leant it on the edge of the car, and was soon in a deep sleep.

And now, with fast beating pulses, she realised that the time had come for decisive action.

Bracing her nerves to meet the sudden launch into space, she slipped the cable. Swiftly as an arrow shot from a bow, the freed balloon clove the air in its upward course—though for the moment it appeared to Lenore that the camp and entrenchments were sinking down, down, down, leaving the "*Dauntless*" suspended in perfect quiescence. But having made a few ascents with her uncle, she knew that this strange subsidence was only an optical illusion, and in nowise affrighted she turned and severed the noose confining the neck of the envelope, thus giving a safety vent to the gas. And then she saw a great cumulus cloud apparently swooping down upon the balloon. The next moment it was enveloped in thick mist. Gradually the dim light brightened, and emerging above the cloud, the "*Dauntless*" soared into the illimitable space of the celestial regions, now flooded with the golden refulgence of the rising sun.

Lenore anxiously waited for the balloon to find its equilibrium, for she



"BRACING HER NERVES TO MEET THE SUDDEN LAUNCH INTO SPACE, SHE SLIPPED THE CABLE"

feared it would surmount the favourable south current that was driving the clouds below. At last the "Dauntless" paused in its upward course, gently descended nearly a hundred feet, and then the rolling clouds below appeared to be suddenly arrested in their course, and she knew that the balloon had yielded itself to the current that was propelling them.

Her feeling of relief was quickly dispelled by an ominous creaking overhead, and on looking up at the silken envelope of the balloon, she saw that it was distended to its utmost. Quick as fear, she seized the valve-rope and gave

vent to the excessive dilation of gas. But her alarm and inexperience led her into discharging an undue quantity, and the "Dauntless" began to descend with terrible rapidity.

Turning hastily to throw out ballast, she tripped on the Captain's extended feet, which brought her stumbling to her knees. A movement and low mutter on his part made her fear that this inadvertency of hers would involve the ruin of her scheme; and for half a minute she remained motionless, anxiously watching his flushed face.

On regaining her feet, and bending over the side of the car to discharge

sand, she was startled to find that the balloon was fast descending within the Americans' entrenchments. To add to her alarm, she saw scores of soldiers rushing forward to secure the runaway captive, and she could plainly hear them shouting to each other.

"Dash me, if there ain't a gal in the car!"

"What's up—what ails Gary?"

"By Jove! she'll come to grief if she don't check it."

Before this warning was well out of the man's mouth, her trembling fingers had emptied one of the ballast bags, and the rapid descent was visibly moderated.

"Hi, steady there with the ballast, my gal!" shouted one of the men, as she turned to throw out more sand. But a second bag followed the first with all despatch, and the "Dauntless" paused, hanging as it were in the wind.

"Sharp, now, and cast off the grapnel!" cried a sapper, excitedly brandishing his bare, brawny arms. At the same moment the balloon pirouetted lightly, and began to ascend.

An outburst of savage invectives rose from the men.

"Let out gas—pull that rope over your head!"

But the only response she made to this was to discharge a few handfuls of sand; and thus aided in its ascent, the "Dauntless" bore steadily upward.

Despite her anxiety, Lenore could not but smile as she looked down on the blank, upturned faces of the disappointed men. Of a sudden an officer seemed to grasp the situation, and in response to his order some artillerymen rushed to one of the siege guns, and set to lowering the breech.

Seeing the deadly peril now threatening the balloon, Lenore cast out ballast by the bagful, her every sense on the alert for the terrible missile that might rend the balloon and bring destruction on herself and her helpless companion. But, despite her desperate position, her hand was steady and her face calm. This keen contest with danger braced nerve and fibre into the firmest courage.

Boom!

The dreaded report shook the air, and resounded loudly from the silken

dome overhead. But the "Dauntless" continued to soar lightly as a lark; the grim projectile had fallen short of the mark!

But she could see the men ramming down a fresh charge and lowering the breech for a higher aim, so with a quick movement she emptied the only remaining bag of ballast.

The next moment a mist obscured her view of the enemy, and she knew the aerial fugitive had reached the safety of the clouds.

Now that the danger was escaped, the girl trembled from head to foot, and sank faintly down on the seat opposite the heavily breathing Captain.

The next minute, having barely surmounted the cloud strata, the "Dauntless" resumed its horizontal course, and on consulting the compass fixed to the instrument-board, Lenore was relieved to see that she was still drifting with the south current. The aneroid showed her that she was now at an altitude of 5,300 feet.

"I must wait a few minutes before I venture below the clouds again," she said to herself, wiping away the chilly drops that had broken out on lip and brow.

Unwilling to gaze on her drunken-looking dupe, she turned and watched the ever-changing configurations of the clouds surrounding the car. Soon they rose up on each side, commingling again far overhead, so that it seemed the balloon was suspended in a vast archway all agleam with opal tints.

Having travelled for five minutes in this fairy-like fashion, she decided that she must be well over the besieged city; and drawing forth her carefully weighted letter, she rose to pull the valve-rope. What was her dismay to find that it was far beyond her reach! Owing to the whirling precipitation of her previous descent, it had become entangled in the cordage secured to the hoop.

Her heart sinking heavily, she realised that it was now beyond her power to effect a descent; she could only trust to her supposition that she was over the city, and drop her letter hap-hazard.

As she bent over the side of the car with this intention, she saw a rift in the

clouds below, through which she caught a glimpse of a large square building surrounded by extensive grounds, and this she recognised with joy as the Agricultural College. Scarcely had she done so, when the clouds again blended their fleeciness; but she had received her cue, and forthwith acting on it, she dropped the precious missive that she hoped and prayed would prove the saving of her lover and the beautiful little city. In a twinkling the white packet was swallowed by the cloud, leaving her full of fear lest its journey should end in tank or chimney.

But the die was cast, and with a deep-drawn breath she drew back from the side of the car. And then there confronted her a new and horrible peril—the ethereal archway had disappeared, leaving the balloon exposed to the hot sunshine, the envelope was expanding rapidly, and she knew it could not long bear the strain of the dilating gas. An explosion and terrific downfall must soon take place!

For the first time during her adventure the horror of death set her heart beating in a wild panic.

"I must get the rope at any risk—as well one death as another!" she exclaimed, springing up on the seat. Then, grasping two of the ropes attaching the car to the hoop, she mounted to the edge of the car. Here she paused, half suffocated by the gas escaping from the neck of the surcharged balloon. In the face of this poisonous outrush, it seemed madness to try to climb into the hoop; but deadly as was the attempt, delay was equally deadly. So with set teeth and suspended breath, she firmly gripped the hoop, and by dint of strenuous muscular effort, drew herself up on the stout ring.

But the irrespirable air overcame her immediately, her brain reeled, her grasp relaxed, and she fell headlong into the car.

* * * * *

"Whoa-a, gee-gee, my bonnet is blowed off!" and a pair of tiny hands tugged mercilessly at a pair of ears in convenient proximity.

Thus sharply reined in, Basil Moncton arrested his galloping steps,

swung round and cantered back to where the white sunbonnet lay fluttering among the clover, like some gigantic butterfly.

"We'll soon fix that on all right, Cissie!" he said, lowering his small rider to the ground. And having replaced the bonnet on her auburn curls, he tied the strings with bungling fingers.

"You ain't tired yet, are you?" asked Cissie, looking into his harassed face.

"Not a bit of it, little one, I will gallop you back to the ridge now," he said, swinging her up on his broad shoulders.

A dashing career down the meadow, a flying leap across the brook and a sober jog-trot up a maple-grown acclivity, brought them to the ridge in question. On the other side it gently descended into an extensive peach orchard, a mass of full-headed trees, all flush with ripening fruit. Beyond them rose the wooden gables of the farmhouse, and at one of the latticed windows Lieutenant Moncton directed a look of anxious intensity. It was the window of the room where his beloved Lenore lay betwixt life and death.

Two weeks had now passed since the day when the good folk of this quiet fruit-growing district on the banks of the Ottawa had been astounded to see a far collapsed balloon falling, parachute fashion, into a wheat-field.

Eager hands had soon freed the car from the heavy, pall-like folds of the rent and exhausted envelope and its network. And then were discovered the two insensible passengers, who straightway received every attention kindness could prompt. Their removal to the nearest house—Tenacre Farm—was carefully effected, and the best medical aid summoned from the neighbouring town.

The young officer, who had received no worse injury than a few bruises, was soon restored to consciousness, when he unwisely gave vent to a savage denouncement of the girl who had drugged his wine and filched his balloon.

Thus learning the true state of affairs, the Canadians indignantly completed the destruction of the spy-balloon,

and treated its captain with open aversion. Indeed, he was glad to take his departure, though more than loath to return to the censure and possible court-martial awaiting him.

As for the girl who had so bravely captured this obnoxious balloon of the enemy's, she became at once a heroine in the eyes of the simple villagers, and her recovery of consciousness was

citement by the news that the besieging army had made a night attack on the city, and had been repulsed with heavy losses. Later on came the thrice welcome intelligence that the siege was raised; for, being completely disorganised by its recent losses and the great mortality caused by the typhoid fever, the American army had been compelled to withdraw its forces.



"AND THEN WERE DISCOVERED THE TWO INSENSIBLE PASSENGERS"

anxiously awaited by one and all. But for many hours she remained in a state of torpid insensibility, only moaning feebly when the surgeon set her arm, which had been broken by the car's violent collision with the ground; and this insensibility was succeeded by the delirium of brain fever.

On the day following the sensational episode of the balloon descent, the village was thrown into yet greater ex-

In the midst of the villagers' rejoicings over these good tidings, a haggard-looking young man, in the dress of a Canadian officer, made his appearance at Tenacre Farm. Giving his name as Lieut. Moncton, he made eager inquiries after the injured lady, who, he explained, was his affianced wife.

Seeing how overcome he was on hearing of the dangerous fever that held her in its grip, Mrs. Hunter, the farmer's

wife, invited him to put up at the farm, and the young fellow had gladly accepted this kind offer. And then he imparted to her the real reason of Lenore having so heroically risked the perils of an aerial voyage. For her letter had been seen to fall in the grounds of the Agricultural College, and had been brought to him in good time for preparations to be made against the enemy's night attack.

Ten days had slowly passed, and now for five hours Lenore had lain in a deep sleep, which the doctor had told them would decide the question of life or death.

All anxiety to ensure quietude on her behalf, the young officer had taken the little five-year-old tyrant of the household out among the orchards and meadows, where her shrill treble and shriller laughter could work no mischief.

And here, while inwardly wrestling with the grimmest fears, he had constrained himself to enter into the child's quickly-varying moods.

"Gee-up! gee-up!" she cried, spurring him with her small heels, as he stood watching the window of the room where Lenore lay.

"Where away now, little maid?" he asked, pulling himself together.

"Round the st'awberry beds, and then you can pick me some."

Accordingly, he started off through the shady orchard, where the bees were humming in myriads among the peach-laden boughs.

On emerging upon the broad area devoted to strawberry growth, he saw Mrs. Hunter standing in the kitchen doorway, shading her eyes with her hand, as though looking for some one. Sighting him, she beckoned eagerly; and he bounded towards her, his heart thumping against his ribs in a tumult of suspense.

Then, seeing a cheerful smile brighten her homely features, he knew the dread shadow had passed, and that his brave Lenore was spared to bless his future.





ALDWORTH CHURCH

The Story of a Great Family

WRITTEN BY GERTRUDE BACON. ILLUSTRATED BY PHOTOGRAPHS

HOW many people know where Aldworth is, even of those who pass their lives within a few miles of this most secluded village? Probably the authorities of St. John's College, Cambridge, have more or less vague ideas of its whereabouts, for the living is in their gift. The Post Office recognises its existence and provides a postman, who with a light bag makes his daily journeys along its lonely lanes. The members of the South Berks Hunt know its geography, and so do the tradesmen of Streatley, some three miles away. Certain of the riverside visitors even, who spend their holidays in blissful idleness, paddling about the reedy banks of the Thames between Pangbourne and Goring, vary their boating and fishing with an excursion over the downs, and passing through the village, take a peep in at the church, of which, maybe, they

have heard from some antiquarian friend enthusiastic enough to undertake a pilgrimage there on purpose.

But no high road runs through the parish; no telegraph connects it with civilization; no cyclists trust their pneumatic tyres on the execrable tracks that lead one thither. Situated on high ground just at the very edge of the wild Berkshire downs that roll in lonely, undulating green slopes as far as the eye can reach, with a rustic population of a few farmers and the labourers they employ, and no interest outside its own fields and hedgerows, Aldworth lies far from the madding crowd, and in self-contained and contented solitude hides itself and all its historic wonders.

And yet this lonely hamlet possesses what is unquestionably the most interesting church in Berkshire. A church that in its own particular way is without a parallel in all England, and to visit which

no less a personage than Queen Elizabeth, with the Earl of Leicester as her guide, rode on horseback all the way from Ewelme in Oxfordshire, many miles distant.

The church stands by the roadside, in a churchyard thickly strewn with nameless graves and mossy tombstones. The east end is shadowed by a gigantic yew tree, whose bent and wildly tossed limbs, all scarred and maimed, tell of many a generation past and many a

century following the Norman conquest, and marks perhaps some earlier sacred building whose very tradition is now lost.

There is little about the exterior of the building to distinguish it from many another village church of the same period, but let the visitor once enter, and he finds himself straightway carried back to another age; an age of belted knights and fierce Crusaders; high-born dames of stately presence; mighty deeds



THE OLD YEW

fierce storm. A few feet above the ground the great gnarled stem suddenly bulges out all round in a remarkable manner till it measures nine yards in girth; a strange excrescence, caused by the top of the tree having at some distant time fallen down through decay into its own hollow trunk, and there taken root again and grown afresh, distending the old stem as it grew. How old it may be no man can guess, but it is certain that it dates far back beyond the church, which was built in the

and blazoned arms, and a faith and reverence strong and deep, if blind also. Ranged around the plain white walls and under the central arches, sleep the members of a great family; great in deeds and honour, and great in stature and strength of limb. Veritably a race of giants; resting peacefully these 600 years beneath the carven effigies that perpetuate their huge proportions and warlike proclivities. The church is filled with them; six beneath the richly foliated ogee arches of their elaborate

canopies in the north and south walls; one alone, and two side by side, in the centre of the church; nine in all, of which two are ladies in flowing robes, one a male unarmed, and six warriors in harness, cross-legged, their hands clasping their sword and shield, or humbly folded in prayer upon their breasts.

The most remarkable figure of all is the easternmost on the north wall, representing a knight of such huge stature that he has to be carved lying on his side, with bent body, to fit into his niche at all. If, as is stated and firmly believed, the statues are really life-size, this giant Crusader must have stood seven foot two, and been broad and mighty of limb in proportion. None of the other effigies approach his in massiveness, though the single figure in the centre of the church must be nearly as long. This last is a singularly beautiful piece of work, the armour delicately finished, and the simplicity and dignity of the pose very striking, in spite of the fact of the monument lying broken in three pieces. For alas! the centuries have left their trace upon this quiet family. Neglect, wanton destruction, and the fiery zeal of the fanatic have fallen with heavy hand. Dates and names are scratched and carved upon the stalwart limbs; features chipped and sawn away; arms and legs broken and missing; in one case, that of the unarmed man on the south wall, even the head is gone and nothing but the mutilated trunk is left. Much is marred, yet much remains. The canopies along the walls are intact, and with their crockets, roses, and finials, afford beautiful examples of the Decorated style of architecture; while to the antiquarian the monuments, shattered as they are, are of absorbing interest. Dating from the 14th century and earlier, they present examples of the best monumental sculpture of the time, and in no other building in England are so large a number of the same period to be found.

The church itself is not without its remarkable features. The font is curious, and the tracery of the windows, but beside the absorbing attraction of these silent tenants all else pales. Who were these mighty warriors? Whence came they? and why are they lying here in this lonely Berkshire village? No inscriptions

are on the walls or tombs, nor any armorial bearing or other clue to their name and history. What are the local traditions? An infirm old rustic, with thin grey locks straggling down over the collar of his white smock-frock, is leading, or rather being led by, an ancient donkey browsing slowly in the ditch. From his age, he would seem to be a likely reference. "Has he been in Aldworth long?" "Man and boy these 80 years," he tells us, after the due interval required for a question to penetrate a Berkshire brain. He was born in that picturesque thatched cottage on the green, and hopes and expects (not without reason) to die there. "Then no doubt he can give us some information about the monuments in the church, and who they represent?" "Well he don't exactly know, but he's heard tell as how (this is the correct local fashion of commencement, hallowed by universal custom) they was a family of the name of Beche, as lived in a castle what stood where Beche farm is now, behind the church yonder, but it was a terrible long time ago."

More detailed knowledge he is utterly incapable of imparting; but when pressed hard, he relates that the villagers give their own interpretation to the various knights, and with a startling lack of originality, have named each of them "John." By way of distinction, the four principal characters are further known as "John Long," "John Strong," "John Ever-afraid" and "John Never-afraid." "John Never-afraid" sold his soul to the Evil One at some period of his reckless existence, and when he came to die, he seems to have been afraid (presumably for the only time in his life) of the consequences of his rash act. By reason of his sin, he dared not be buried in the interior of the church, while to be buried outside seemed to rob him of its sacred protection, and his only hope of salvation; so a compromise was effected, and he was interred at the porch, in the wall itself. This is the local legend, and certain it is that by the south door is an arch built into the wall, under which, ancient histories tell us, the figure of a man in armour once lay. John Strong is of course the giant, and John Long the tall man, on the centre tomb, while

John Ever-afraid is doubtless the unarmed figure, the tradition of whose cowardice would render him an especially worthy object of destruction.

But tradition does poor John Ever-afraid an injustice, as we discover when we learn his history. This same history and that of his companions, however, has been no easy thing to trace, and for many generations was only very partially known. Records were hard to find, and though much was patiently unearthed, yet much was mere surmise, until some twenty-five years ago, when a clue was discovered. In ploughing over the fields where once the castle stood, a silver seal was brought to light, which on investigation proved to be the seal of Isabella De la Beche, one of the ladies represented in the church, and bearing her coat of arms. The possession of armorial bearings proved of immense assistance in the search for information, and our knowledge may now be said to be fairly complete.

Briefly then, the history of the Aldworth Monuments is in this wise. They represent different members of a great family of the name of De la Beche, who held lands in the parish at least as early as 1230, and whose ancestor had come to England with William the Con-

queror, one of whose Major Barons he was, as recorded in Doomsday Book. The two knights under the central and west canopies of the north wall are father and son, who are believed to have accompanied Longshanks on the last Crusade, when Queen Eleanor sucked the poisoned wound, and their cross-legged effigies were placed in the church by their immediate descendant John Strong, the giant.

John Strong was a distinguished man. He was Sheriff of Berks and Oxford in 1313 and 1314, he was valet to Edward the Second, he held lands in Battersea and Wandsworth besides his Aldworth estate, and he had six sons, the three eldest of whom were at one time Knights of the Shire for Berks, Wilts and Sussex respectively. Great was his honour and great his wealth, some of which he expended on his parish church, and his own and his forebears' tombs. But a time of sore trial and disgrace came upon him and his family. In 1322, he and his sons took up arms against the King, under the Earl of Lancaster, and being defeated at the battle of Boroughbridge, were taken prisoners. Possibly they considered themselves fortunate in not sharing the fate of their leader, and escaping with their heads, but John Strong was imprisoned at Pomfret, his



JOHN STRONG



JOHN LONG

second son at Scarborough, and his eldest (considered a ringleader) in the Tower; and there in dreary captivity they languished for five years, till Edward the Third coming to the throne, they were pardoned and restored to their forfeited honours. But not for long, for probably as a result of their treatment (imprisonment was no light matter in those days), the eldest son survived his release barely a year, and in less than two his father had followed him.

The third son, Sir Nicholas (John Long), at the time of the rebellion, fared better than his relations. He was then Keeper of Montgomery Castle, and never bore arms against the King, though refusing to raise men for him; and though warrants were made out against him, he contrived to lie low till the storm was past. Then he emerged from obscurity, and by his subsequent career raised the shattered family honour to its highest pitch.

Under Edward the Third he became Constable of the Tower, tutor to the Black Prince, and Superintendent of the Royal Children. He fought at Crecy, was summoned to Parliament, and made Lord of the Marches of Wales and Seneschal of Gascony. Meanwhile his leisure moments were employed in completing the work begun by his father in

Aldworth Church, where he added the south aisle, and the monuments to his father and brothers. His ardour for church building and decorating at one time almost lost him his position and liberty, as related in an old chronicle.

"The King coming in great wrath out of Flanders (by reason he had been disappointed of the moneys on which he depended for carrying on the siege of Tourney), got to the Tower of London about midnight, where finding no more than his own children and three servants, this Sir Nicholas being then Constable thereof, he committed him and the Lord Mayor of London and divers others of his great officers to several prisons. But long he remained not under his displeasure." This was in 1340, when the new aisle was building, and it is only reasonable to imagine that the Constable had seized the occasion of the King's absence to take a run down to Aldworth to inspect the progress of the work.

But now at the summit of its fortune, the great family was about to become extinct. Nicholas became possessed of the property on the death of his young nephew, John Ever-afraid, who died in early youth before knighthood, and hence is represented on his tomb without armour, and he himself dying childless, left his younger brother Edmond as sole

male representative of his name. Edmond was an ecclesiastic, archdeacon of Berks, and therefore unmarried, and so a very few years later the effigies in the church and an illustrious memory were all that remained of the De la Beches of Aldworth.

With the loss of its great house, the parish fell slowly into evil days. The castle disappeared, and as the years went by the memory of its owners faded away. Still their monuments filled the church, and we are told in a MS. preserved in the British Museum, being the note book of an officer in the army of King Charles at the time of the Civil War, that "in ye East end of ye South yle did hang a Table fairly written in Parchement of all ye names of ye family of De la Beche ; but ye last Earle of Leicesster coming with ye Queen Elizabeth in progress, took it down to show it her, and it was never brought again."

This gives a proof of the utter neglect and carelessness of the village authorities of that time ; to be followed by days when the presence of figures in the church was considered as savouring of Popish rite, and not to be tolerated. As a proof of the Godforsaken state to which the parish was reduced, witness the entry in the Register of 1658, where Thomas Longland, the vicar, writes that he resigns his cure because he will not "accede to the sacrilege and wickedness of the people."

Surely the wonder is not that the monuments have suffered such injury, but that the tough old stone, partaking of the stubborn qualities of the stout hearts it figures, has so well withstood the onslaughts of time and fanaticism, and with so much of its former pride and beauty remains to us now as a tangible link between our nineteenth century civilization and the days of Chivalry.





THE WOOD-YARDS

A Sussex Industry

WRITTEN BY "GLENAVON." ILLUSTRATED WITH PHOTOGRAPHS
BY R. HENNEL

SUSSEX is still a happy hunting ground for the artist, the archæologist, and the nature-lover, for it retains even in this bustling nineteenth century much of its primitive character. Not being by any means a "show county," it is not overrun, save in the immediate vicinity of such fashionable resorts as Brighton and Eastbourne, by hordes of excursionists; and though year by year, in the relentless march of so-called improvement, many an ancient landmark is obliterated, yet there are plenty of picturesque "bits" left for those who possess the seeing eye. An Elizabethan chimney-stack is by no means rare in this part of the country. Many an old world church has escaped the hand of the restorer. Here may be seen a mutilated market-cross; there a mediæval hostelrie. Indeed, there may yet be found a few villages which have but slightly altered in appearance

during the last three hundred years, and "whose inhabitants are Saxon folk descended straight from King Alfred's rustics, without a drop of mixed blood in their veins." Everyone, I suppose, has heard of Hurstmonceaux Castle, and its ghostly drummer. During the summer season, laden chars-à-banc convey hundreds of people from Eastbourne to visit the romantic ruin which was once the largest mansion ever owned by a commoner in England; probably scarcely any of these tourists penetrate to the quaint village of Hurstmonceaux or are aware of the fact that an industry exists here which is not only peculiar to the country, but which may fairly lay claim to an Anglo-Saxon origin. Has the reader ever heard of a Sussex trug? It is really a basket, but instead of being made of osiers it is made of very thin wood. The larger sizes are particularly useful for gardening purposes, etc.; the smaller ones are sold at seaside towns,



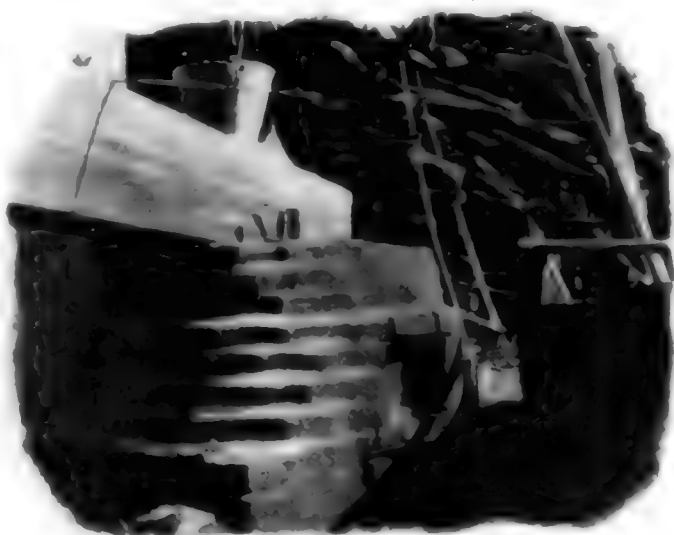
THE STEAMING SHOP

for children ; while some are extremely dainty in appearance, and are used by ladies as flower and work baskets. The antiquity of the implement is undoubted. We read that Britain supplied imperial Rome with baskets, and the manufacture of trugs may be a surviving relic of the most ancient of British industries. The original inventor of the modern improved trug was one Thomas Smith, of Hurstmonceux, whose grandsons are now the principal makers. Though four or five other factories exist in this neighbourhood, trugs are, I believe, not made anywhere in England except within a radius of ten miles of the original factory. It was on a bright crisp day in February that I visited Messrs. Smith's premises with the friend to whom I am indebted for the charming series of photos which illustrate my article. It is a pleasant walk (about four miles) from Hailsham station to Hurstmonceux, especially on a fresh spring morning. As you ascend the gently rising ground an extensive view presents itself. Below the Pevensey marshes or "flats" stretch onwards to the blue line of sea ; above is the height of Normanhurst. A lark carols blithely over-

head (larks seem somehow inseparable from a Sussex landscape), lambs gambol in the meadows, while chickens in the youngest and fluffiest stage of their existence may be seen in many a cottage garden, for the rearing of poultry in readiness for the periodical visits of the "hig-gler" is almost universal in this district.

We were received with much courtesy by Mr. Edwin Smith. Unluckily we arrived during the dinner-hour, so we whiled away the time till the return of the workmen by looking at the various medals which have been awarded to Messrs. Smith in London,

Paris, and Edinburgh ; then we discussed our own frugal lunch of biscuits and chocolate, and having vainly tried to induce some fowls to pose for us in the foreground, we took a snapshot of the wood-yard. The factory being a modern structure of corrugated iron, does not lend itself to artistic photography. When the men returned we had the different processes of trug-making explained to us. The first operation is to provide the strips of wood. For this purpose willow stems (locally known as "sallies") are cut into the requisite lengths and split with an



FURNACE USED IN THE STEAMING OF THE WOOD



THE WORKSHOP

axe. They are then planed down and trimmed, and when moistened will bend into any shape. For the frame, handle, and braces of the larger trugs, ash or chestnut wood is used, and needs steaming before it can be bent with ease. The original trugs are of an elliptical shape, resembling a flat basket. Small trugs are made of five strips of wood, larger ones of more. The ash handle encloses them in the shape of something like a circle intersecting at right angles the oblong top frame, on which the bottom strips are fastened with tacks or nails. Braces, to give strength to the basket, extend sideways on each side, from the handle, holding the trug together at

half-height from the bottom. These are also used as supports for the strips which are nailed upon them. Some trugs have feet or rests instead of braces. It will thus be seen that the "plant" required for making trugs is of the simplest. No expensive machinery is used, nor chemicals of any kind, so that the work is peculiarly healthy. Moreover, as division of labour has no place in this manufacture, each workman turns out six or seven dozen baskets per week, and is able to take a genuine pride in his productions. While my friend was grouping the employés (the staff consists of seven men and two boys, we were informed), I plied the good-natured



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master with questions, and was taken by him to see the store of baskets ready to be despatched to their respective destinations. Trugs big and little, rough and dainty, were piled in large quantities; they are all extremely strong and will stand years of hard wear; one variety is made to hold firewood, another kind—18 inches by 5½ inches—is intended to hold cucumbers. A round trug with holes to put the hands through instead of a handle took my fancy; it is constructed for stable use, to hold a feed of corn. The latest novelty is a basket with a walking-stick through the centre; a lady can go into her garden, and stand it up close to where the flowers or fruit are without stooping, and support herself, if needs be, in going to and returning from the garden; it is also very useful for taking fancy work, books, etc., out-of-doors. This basket was much admired by Princess Beatrice, and she purchased one. Trugs have travelled far afield to Spain, Italy,

Austria, Norway, Sweden, and Germany; they have even been sent to Australia. Large consignments are sent to be sold at bazaars, and Mr. Smith showed me numerous letters from well-known personages expressing satisfaction with goods received. To an article which appeared some time ago in the *Sussex Advertiser*, and also to Mr. E. Smith's kind explanations, I am indebted for the accuracy of my statements. In common with most women I have no knowledge of, and take but little interest in, machinery. To visit an ordinary factory would be positively irksome to me, but a small industry, such as this, which affords scope for deftness of hand and creative ingenuity, must appeal to all who, with Ruskin, believe in the dignity of labour, and deplore the tendency of the present age to regard workmen merely as so many "hands," and, by the division of labour system to destroy all individuality and just pride in the thing produced.



THE LATEST NOVELTY



THE HOUSE of OMAR BEY

A TALE OF EGYPT IN '39

WRITTEN BY DAVID BEDDOE. ILLUSTRATED BY J. E. GILLINGWATER

HE stood at the corner of the narrow street which ran off the great highway of Cairo, a square-shouldered, stalwart young Englishman; and he glanced curiously up the quiet lane, where only a water-carrier came staggering beneath his bursting goat-skin.

He saw the high-storied houses, solemn and grim, with only here and there tiny barred windows to relieve their dullness, and blinking he wondered what lay up this shady lane and behind those forbidding-looking walls.

He did not hear the warning cries of the *sais* or the rattle of wheels, until suddenly something grazed his arm violently, and he roused himself just in time to escape the wheels of a passing carriage. He looked up and caught a glimpse of a woman's face.

John Blankley was ever of hot blood. It was a common saying that where women were concerned the Blankleys were mad—and this woman was fair, lovely as only an Eastern woman can be; and she smiled on John Blankley standing there in the sunlight of Cairo's

highway. In that instant no one but John Blankley had seen the coquettish lift of the *yashmak*, or that winsome smile. Better for him a million times that he had not seen it either; but having seen it, he left the sunlit street—he left the bustle of the great highway—and plunged down the shady lane in the wake of the carriage and its vision of loveliness.

He saw the *sais* running in front with the panther skins over their shoulders. He saw the high-stepping Arab horses with their silver trappings. He saw the two coal-black figures on the box resplendent in the gorgeous colouring of the East—and he wondered whose livery they wore.

He did not know that they were the possessions, and the woman inside the wife, of Omar Bey, high minister to Mahomed Ali, Omar Bey, at whose very name men trembled; for if ever there was a fiend incarnate it was this same Omar, the Turk, whose wife had in wanton mischief raised her veil to the staring Englishman.

John Blankley had always been a reckless, obstinate fellow, and many

were the things which men told regarding him; but never had he done a more dare-devil, senseless thing, than when, after seeing the great gates close behind the gorgeous equipage of Omar, he loafed about waiting for night-fall on the chance of obtaining an entry into that grim fortress-like mansion, so that he might, if possible, see more of this woman, the flash of whose dark eyes had so fired his blood. There are few difficulties which can stand in the way of a man with so subtle a brain as had John Blankley, especially when united

with a grim determination to succeed and a total disregard of the means employed; and night time, by a strange combination of events, found John Blankley within those iron gates, in the presence, too, of the woman for whose sake he had put his head within the lion's jaws.

The woman, though at first pleased at the conquest her beauty had made, grew fearful as the danger came home to her. It is true that Omar was away. But who knew when he might return? And who could trust Suleiman, the eunuch—



"AND SHE CRIED OUT, 'GO, GO!'"

Suleiman, who ever smiled and uttered fair words? And she cried out, "Go, go! for the love of Allah, go!"

The man laughed recklessly. "Not without another kiss of the sweetest lips in Cairo."

But hush! the great gates are creaking. There is a rattle of wheels in the courtyard. 'Tis Omar! Omar back from the wars.

* * * * *

A beggar sat at the corner of the street begging alms: not in voluble phrases, but far more eloquently by means of his very silence and misery.

He had sat there for five years, and no man had ever heard his voice—no man ever would! For no articulate word could come from the lips of this silent and woe-begone figure, who sat turning his sightless eye-balls on the passers-by. He looked an old man. His unkempt hair was grizzled, and he walked along as one whose back felt the weight of years. No man knew his name or where he lived; yet day after day he crouched at the street corner until towards evening—when from the top of the neighbouring Mosque the Mueddin called the faithful to prayer—a lad would come and lead him hobbling away.

Of the many who passed by, and stirred by his wretchedness uttered a prayer to Allah, the merciful, the compassionate, not one guessed that beneath that mutilated God-forsaken figure there was a mind that raged with all the fury of a volcano. He looked so broken, so utterly destitute, so much beyond all human passion and feeling. Twice only was he roused from this inanimate lethargy; and then no one, if they had noticed it, paid any heed. It was only the beggar who begged alms at the street corner.

Once was when one day down the street came the warning cries of the *sais*, the rattle of wheels, and the murmurs of the people near by told that Omar Bey the Turk was driving by in all the glory of his pride and rank. Then the crouching figure seemed to dilate, the eyelids retracted off the struggling, sightless orbs, and the nostrils of the beggar expanded as those of a

hound when he gets scent of his foe. But as the carriage whirled by and the sound of wheels grew fainter the beggar relapsed into his customary attitude, though the deep growlings in his throat seemed like the low mutterings of a passing storm, and the twitching and working of his livid face told that there were depths where fire still smouldered in this forlorn and afflicted man. Another time was when there came by a party of sightseers, speaking a different tongue to Arab and Turk—a tongue which seemed to send a strange thrill through the beggar who sat on the sun-baked pathway. He looked up with his sightless eyes, and an expression as of hope played for an instant like a sunbeam over his saddened countenance. He sprang to his feet, and with outstretched hands, like a child running from some dreaded danger, he ran up to where the sound came from. His lips moved; he tried to speak, but only strange noises came from his struggling throat.

One of the ladies screamed, and a man, with harsh words, bade him keep away. Then a voice beside him said "Pardon, *effendi*—he is mad; he knows not what he does."

"Poor creature," said the lady, and slipped a two-piastre piece into his hand; and they passed on.

The beggar sobbed aloud and lay back a crushed and hopeless figure on the baked earth at the corner.

When the boy whose duty it was to lead him home came that night as usual, he found him looking so utterly weary and dispirited that he took him by the arm a little more gently than he was accustomed to, as he guided him back to the house where he lived.

As a rule, when he returned at night-time from his day's watch, he devoured ravenously the food placed before him, for from day-break scarcely a bite or a sup greeted his lips. But to-night he left it untasted. He scarce seemed to have enough life left even to notice it, as feeling the wall with his hand he crawled along towards the littered straw which was his bed, and cast himself down upon it in the very helplessness of despair.

The boy came in to take away the food, and he stared at the rag-covered

figure, and he wondered why the food remained untasted, and why the beggar shook so strangely. But the object on the straw pallet did not hear him. He was alone—alone with his misery.

Five years he had led that life of wretchedness and want—a life than which not a dog in Egypt had a worse.

Good God! five years! was it only five years? He seemed to have lived for centuries. Yet how well he remembered it. He could hardly believe it was he who had stood at the street corner so full of the strength of his manhood.

He had fought. Oh, yes, he had fought; but what was one among a dozen? and the woman with the dark eyes and the lovely face. God help her, he had heard her voice ringing in his ears night and day for ever so long. It still rang there sometimes even now—a woman's voice, pleading in piteous tones to one who never knew what mercy was, then rising in fierce accents with the final appeal of her religion.

"By the law of the Blessed Book, I swear four times by God that Sulieman is a liar, and I invoke the curse of God upon me if I speak not the truth." Then came the usual sneering laugh which told her that the law of the Korah was as powerless to help her as her own piteous appeal for mercy.

He remembered how he himself burst out—t'was the only thing a man could do—"This woman is guiltless; punish me if you like, but let the woman go free."

"Silence, you dog! your turn is coming." That, and a blow on the mouth, was his only answer.

A whisper to the Nubian guards, and, shrieking, the woman was led away to that doom which was to be her lot for dishonouring the house of Omar Bey.

Then followed—God Almighty! he could not think of that. He never knew that such fiends existed on God's earth. They dragged him away, and the last sight he ever saw was Omar's devilish grin of pleasure as they closed his eyes for ever.

How he cursed Omar in the madness of his agony, and uttered words that stung to the quick the impassive mind

of the Turk. Better for him had he not uttered them. They were the last he ever spoke. Heaven above! what hellish things they did to him before God threw his mantle of forgetfulness over his mind, and he awoke to a sightless, dumb existence.

Year in, year out, he had been led by someone to the street corner so that his very misery might get him sustenance from the passers-by. Sustenance! It was not that which kept him alive. No, 'twas the hope of escape—the dream of revenge. Life! what was life to him—a beggar, blind and dumb; an object at which men shuddered as they went by. For others it might be a thing to cling to, but for him it was a curse. But rescue, revenge, that is why he had clung to life—life from which he could have rid himself so easily—and rescue! Ah, to-day he had found the opportunity he had longed for. His own kith and kin had passed him by. His own kith and kin from whose grip even Omar Bey could not have wrested him, and they had spurned him. Life, rescue, protection, he had claimed from them; and they had give him—a two-piastre piece.

* * * * *

There was a guest in the house of Omar the Turk, one of rank, to judge by the preparations in Omar's private apartments. Magnificent they always were, but extra care seemed to have been displayed to-night, as if Omar wished to impress his guest with the prodigal wealth of Mahomed's high minister. The gorgeous lamp above sent down its tinted light upon the marble floor where a fountain splashed, and showed up the costly cushions on the deewan, the panelling on the walls, the glorious colouring with which oriental potentates love to surround themselves.

The tray upon which the repast was spread was of solid silver with handles of gold, and the kursie upon which it rested, and on each side of which the host and his guest sat, was of the choicest wood, inlaid with ivory and mother of pearl.

Behind each stood a black servant in sudeyree and kuftan, whilst others

moved with noiseless step watching, ever ready to obey the slightest wish of their lord and master.

The Pasha's guest was a man with a laughing, devil-may-care face. He was clad in the undress uniform of Mahomed Ali, the lion of Egypt, whose iron grip would have wrested the sceptre from the nerveless hand of his master had not Kismet willed it otherwise; and they made merry, these two, over many a joke and many a bottle of wine.

They formed a marked contrast—the impassive, sinister-looking host and his merry-faced guest, who spoke Turkish with a queer accent.

Boon companions both, they had yet looked upon many a hard fight, many a bloody deed; for they were wild times and Egypt was not the place for scrupulous, fastidious men.

The life history of each of these—the mercenary soldier and the high Egyptian official—held more than one strange episode, and they laughed as they told of things at which others would have drawn back appalled, and the sound of their merriment echoed in many a distant apartment.

The dishes had been removed, the nargeelehs lighted, and with bottles of wine near by they prepared to make a night of it.

"Ah, Pasha," exclaimed his guest, "I see that you differ from your countrymen in preferring wine to coffee."

"It is good wine," replied the Pasha.

"How many piastres a bottle?"

The Pasha smiled.

"Ah, ah!" laughed his guest, "he gave you wine, and you paid him with stripes, an ample requital I'll wager, for you were ever a generous paymaster."

The Pasha did not look displeased at this doubtful compliment. He only blinked his half-shut eyes and smiled.

"It will taste all the better for that," replied his guest, pouring some out and eyeing with no little pleasure the sparkling liquid. "Here, Pasha," he cried, raising the glass, "a toast. To our next campaign." But he did not drink. The glass was arrested half way to his waiting lips. He was staring towards the door through which a man in rags was coming, feeling his way.

The Turk glanced round, and with a

loud oath sprang to his feet. But the blind figure had heard the movement, and leaving the wall, he rushed towards the toast-maker.

"Hello!" exclaimed the latter with a laugh, "what have we here, Pasha—one of your houris from Paradise?"

But the Pasha's face was black with rage. "Take him away," he shouted, "take him away." The slaves rushed forward, but the ragged creature had thrown himself at the feet of the Pasha's guest, and with his sightless orbs looking up seemed to be imploring his protection.

There was something so appealing in the prostrate figure that the soldier, restraining his first impulse, laid a hand almost soothingly on the ragged shoulder. No sooner, however, had he done so than the man with trembling fingers pushed something into it.

The quick eye of the Pasha's guest glanced at that over which his hand had closed, and in an instant, there was a change in his manner.

"A minute, Pasha," said he, as he moved round, "what is this new guest of yours? He looks rather the worse for wear. Let us give him a drink."

"You are trifling, sir," said the Pasha hotly. "He is only a madman." The slaves moved forward, but the guest still barred the way.

"Tell me his story, Pasha. I am in a mood to hear stories to-night."

The Pasha swore. "Enough of this foolery, colonel," he exclaimed angrily. "I'll teach him to intrude on me, the unbelieving dog."

"Ah, Pasha, he is not one of your faith then—a Christian, perhaps."

The Turk bit his lip. He did not reply, but with a peremptory gesture motioned to his men.

A slave stepped up and seized hold of the beggar's shoulder, but a shove from the sinewy arm of the guest sent him sprawling.

"Colonel," roared the Pasha furiously, "do you dare beard me in my own house. By what right do you interfere in my concerns?"

"By right of blood," replied the other coolly. "He is English, and so am I, having been born in Dublin across the water."

The wretched figure stroked the hand of his self-appointed protector, and, turning up a ragged sleeve, pointed to where upon his arm there lay something tattooed.

The Pasha's guest jumped as if he were shot. "God in heaven!" he ejaculated. "You hound," he cried, turning on the Turk. "You shall answer to me for this. This man goes with me."

"He does not, by Mahomed's head," shrieked the Turk, and, clapping his hands, his guard came in. "Seize them! Seize them!" he shouted.

But the mercenary soldier had stood too long in the fore-front of battle to draw back in the face of odds. He smiled as he saw the beggar seize a knife. "All right," said he, laying a hand almost caressingly on the ragged shoulder, "we'll fight this out together."

They stood there facing one another; on one side the livid, sinister-looking Turk and his bloodthirsty janissaries—on the other, a beggar no longer crouching but standing erect and gripping tightly a formidable knife, and beside him the reckless, devil-may-care soldier of fortune with a sword in his hand, and a look on his face that Omar knew of old. He had seen it at the awful fight of Nisibi, when this alien at the head of his cavalry had snatched the victory for Mahomed of Egypt.

He had ever hated him, if it were only for the honours which Mahomed Ali had lavished upon him. They would have been his, had it not been for this interloper. And beside that, this man and Ibrahim, Mahomed's heir, were they not bosom friends—Ibrahim who at Mahomed's death would alone stand between Omar and the Pashalik. He had been working for it for years, digging like a mole in the dark, and the death of this Englishman would be one more obstacle from his path. "Ah, yes, Allah was good. He had given him one more enemy into his hands," and his deep-set eyes gleamed as he drew back behind his soldiers, for he knew this mercenary soldier, and it was as well not to be within arm's length.

He had him now. He would doubtless kill many of his soldiers; but what did that matter. He could never get out

alive. And Omar Pasha gloated over his victim from behind the shelter of his janissaries, gloated for a moment before he gave the word to hack and slay.

But why did his guest smile? What—what was that? There was a sound in the courtyard below—a tramp of armed men—and straightway into the room, without warning, without announcement, there walked a man whose long white beard reached low on his breast.

He was old, very old, but in his piercing eye and commanding carriage there was something kingly.

He glanced from one to the other. The Pasha's guest smiled again as he shoved his sword back with a rattle into the scabbard, and the Pasha bowed low to the very ground, for the new-comer was Mahomed Ali, the lion of Egypt.

"What means this brawl?" he asked sternly.

"The Colonel is drunk," exclaimed Omar, with his deprecating smile.

"Drunk, I wish I were—drunk, mad, anything, rather than see a countryman like this in this hell-bound place. But I'll get the truth, and by God! Pasha or no Pasha, the man who did this thing will have to answer to me for it."

"An Englishman!" exclaimed Mahomed, eyeing the squalid figure. "You are wrong, Colonel."

"Wrong! I'd know an English face beneath all the filth of Egypt," was the blunt reply; but the beggar was plucking his sleeve.

"Bring writing materials," said Mahomed, his quick brain divining the beggar's intention.

Omar interposed with a word.

"Silence!" exclaimed his master, "It is my wish."

They brought pen and paper, and placed them before the ragged figure, and slowly, and in crabbed letters, he told his tale; and as he wrote, the Englishman's face, which looked over his shoulder, grew hard and stern, and when the last word was done, he went up to Omar Pasha and called him a name that no man had ever dared cast in his teeth before.

The Turk was no coward, and his hand sought the scimitar at his side. "Dog!" he cried, "I'll have revenge for that."

"When you please," replied the other, "the sooner the better."

"Peace!" exclaimed Mahomed. "Omar Pasha," he thundered, "who was this woman?"

"One Fatmah, a woman of my household," replied Omar, paling.

Mahomed's eyes were on him. "You lie, Omar Pasha; it was Zuleima, my cousin, whom I gave you to wife. You told me she had died, and you have murdered her."

The Turk was trembling now. He mumbled out something as he glanced furtively round towards the entrance. But the Royal Guards had blocked the way.

The Englishman stepped up, and seemed to be pressing something on his master. "No, no, you know that you have only to ask me, and that thing is yours Colonel; but not this. He is not worthy of the sword of a warrior." Then, turning once more upon his high minister, he exclaimed, whilst his lips seemed to curl with contempt, "Omar, the Turk, you thought to deceive me with your plotting and your fair speeches. I know you for what you are—a liar and a traitor."

He gave a signal. The Royal Guards closed round, and Omar Pasha, bound and guarded, was marched off.

They led John Blankley away. The soldier took him home and tended him with his own hands, as he might have



"THEY FOUND HIM ONE MORNING LYING AT THE CITADEL GATES"

done a brother; and he clothed him and fed him, until at last he had the semblance of an elderly English gentleman. But the iron had entered too deeply into his soul; and they found him one morning lying at the citadel gates, over which there swung and creaked the limp figure of Omar Pasha, once high minister to Mahomed Ali; and on the upturned face there was a smile—such a smile as a man might have who at length sees before him a sight for which he has waited long, and, lo! it was good.



UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, ABERYSTWYTH

Women Students in Wales

WRITTEN BY A. WALLIS MYERS. ILLUSTRATED BY PHOTOGRAPHS



O be a resident girl student at the University College, Aberystwyth, is to realise to the fullest extent the feminine desire to go forward. The girls who live at the Alexandra Hall, a palatial building facing the sea, almost breasting the waves of the mighty Atlantic, and lying under the base of the fine old Constitution Hill, are typical progressives and yet—typical British girls. Going there to obtain learning, and for what is freely described as “polish,” the fair academicians return to their homes braced in spirit, braced in body, and possessed

with the knowledge that to go to college is not to go to school.

There are now in residence attached to the University at Aberystwyth, about 180 women-students, a number which, considering the fact that fourteen years ago no girl undergraduates found favour in the eyes of the academic authorities, is almost incredible to understand. Not that before 1885 anything in the constitution of the College forbade the introduction of the fair sex—indeed, there were at one time women students in a long since defunct musical department; but no one seems to have thought of it, perhaps because the demand for

higher education of women was less keen than now. Lent Term, 1884, will ever be memorable in the annals of the Welsh University, for it marked the enrolment of the first girl student taking the ordinary College course. Starting with ten girls in 1884, this number increased to forty in 1888, eighty in 1892, and 160 in 1897.

In October, 1885, a large house on the Marine Terrace—a promenade which, according to some authorities, has no equal on the western coast for its invigorating breezes—was chartered as a hall of residence for women students. Residence here, however, was not made compulsory, and the inmates of the Hall were but few. Compulsory habitation was decided upon for session 1887-88, and a house, this time of more commodious pretensions, was once more taken. It was at this period that Miss E. A. Carpenter was appointed Lady-Principal of the Hall (now the Queen's Hotel), a post which she still holds at the new building, and, let us hope, for

the sake of the College, will still continue to hold for many a year. It is acknowledged by those who are interested in the advancement of educational facilities among women that, not only has Miss Carpenter advanced women's education at Aberystwyth, but women's education in general; her energy, tact, organising power, and versatility have greatly added to the success of the first women's university in Wales, and the example she has set is tenfold, for the educational usefulness of Aberystwyth is by no means limited to the Principality.

Students have flocked to this model institution, in the centre of the Welsh coast-line, from all parts of England and Wales, and some from Scotland, Ireland and India, while many former members of the feminine side of the University, holding important and valuable appointments, are scattered over a still wider area, doing excellent work in their different spheres of activity and bringing the admirable training they received at



MISS CARPENTER, LADY PRINCIPAL

From Photo by H. H. DAVIES, Aberystwyth

their Celtic College into strong influence on the minds and hearts of the younger generation. Former students may be found in the responsible positions of college lecturers, head-mistresses in secondary schools, assistant-mistresses, private secretaries, and many other valuable offices in which they, through their many-sidedness, good sense, and practicality, are fittingly suitable to engage. It is a sure sign that a girl has been brought up in the paths of temperance, unselfishness and self-respect, when, as instructress of her juniors, she can wield the bâton of firm yet fair authority for many years, and with fruitful successes by the way to cheer her in the march forward. Created in the terms of friendly intellectual intercourse at college is the feeling of independence which stands a girl, bent on making her way amid the turmoil and competition of a busy world, in such excellent stead. However difficult and long-drawn may be the crusade against the dicta of one's parents, or one's guardians, against customs of the past and possible dangers hinted at in the future, against first attempts badly executed and consequently disheartening, against poor and comfortless surroundings and unlooked-for disaster, the girl with a trained independence and an indomitable will of her own, holds the lead with any of her neighbours reared in the close quarters of the paternal home.

The women's side in the Welsh University has long since passed the experimental stage, and its students now constitute not far from half the undergraduate contingent, which at present numbers about 400. Many academic successes have to be recorded; to name only a few we find College scholarships and exhibitions amounting to £3,950, seven at Cambridge and two at Oxford, a research scholarship in political economy and one Gilchrist travelling scholarship. There are no less than 106 girls who have passed the matriculation at the London University; after their names, 73 can prefix "B.A.", 3 "M.A.", and 8 "B.Sc.", while one ex-student is now a "D.Sc."

For this eminently satisfactory list of honours, a lasting memorial to the suc-

cess of Aberystwyth as a centre for the higher education of our girls, the administration assign many excellent causes. They remark on the close union between the Hall and the College; on the reasonable fees, £50 being about the average total payment made for board, residence and tuition during the whole session; the healthy environment, and the thorough way in which the "mixed" system is carried out. Here we get men and women attending the same lectures, learning the same lessons, entering into the same social life, and practically playing the same amusements. Progress is great in Wales, but there is no aping of men's ways, no silly emulation, such as the smoking of cigarettes, the carrying of canes, or the wearing of eye-glasses in the daily life of these fresh British maidens. At the same time they are far from giving one the impression of being bluestockings and absorbed bookworms. Climbing the neighbouring mountains, cycling in the charming Welsh valleys, rowing on the turbulent Bay, playing golf, hockey and cricket, the girls at the Alexandra Hall are essentially students and sports-women at the same time.

I venture to quote two clauses set forth in the College charter, granted in 1889, which, I think, exhibit in a clear and distinct way the equality of women as recognised in Wales. The first reads:—

"Female students shall be admissible to all the benefits and emoluments of the College, and women shall be eligible to sit on the Governing Body, on the Council, and on the Senate."

The second makes it well worth noting that the University of Wales, though the youngest of its kind, is the most liberal of all the resident British Universities in its recognition of the educational claims of what is called the weaker sex:—

"Women shall be eligible equally with men for admittance to any degree which the University is by this, our charter, authorised to confer. Every office hereby created in the University, and the membership of every authority hereby constituted, shall be open to women equally with men."

I merely quote these two clauses to

show girls how thoroughly and specifically their educational interests and rights are protected in gallant little Wales.

To describe the interior of the Alexandra Hall is to describe a model dwelling-place. Its equipment, absolute

who was instrumental in securing a grant of £2,000 from the Pfeiffer Bequest, a fund of £70,000 left in trust for the advancement of women's education by a Welsh lady, Mrs. Emily Pfeiffer. This piece of good fortune, coming at a time when, owing to financial difficul-



CENTRAL HALL OF THE COLLEGE, WALES

cleanliness, up-to-date arrangements and perfect regulations aptly fit it as a residential quarter even for the most fastidious student. Opened in June, 1896, by the Princess of Wales, the Hall owed its timely creation mainly to the untiring exertions of Sir Lewis Morris,

ties of the College, resulting from a heavy debt, the Hall scheme had perforce to remain in abeyance, infused new life into the work, resulting in the attainment of an excellent site on the sea-front at the extreme north end of the terrace. The day that the Hall was

formally opened by Her Royal Highness will ever be memorable in the annals of the College; for it also witnessed the installation of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales as Chancellor of the University of Wales, while on the same occasion distinguished degrees were conferred on both the Prince and Princess, Earl Spencer, Lord Herschell and Mr. Gladstone.

The Hall, as completed in June of last year, is constructed of local stone (grey grit), with dressings of buff freestone from the well-known Salopian quarries of Grinshill. There are five stories, not including the basement, accommodating 200 students; there is a sea-

placed on the table from 4.30 to 6.15, and there is a supper at 9 p.m., at which attendance is optional. Next to the dining-room is a suite of drawing-rooms, all with 12 feet headroom. On the same floor there are a large recreation room, a matron's room, a servants' hall, and a commodious kitchen.

The rest of the building is mainly occupied with bedrooms, general studies, private studies, and what are known as study-bedrooms. The last-named combine bed and sitting-room accommodation; they are exceedingly light and airy compartments, and when daintily furnished and decorated by the students, present a pleasing and inviting appear-



A DRAMATIC GROUP

From Photo by H. H. DAVIES, Aberystwyth

frontage to the west of 182 feet, and the width extends 95 feet, part of the central space being occupied by a courtyard. In the case of chimney-stacks, blue bricks have been employed with bands of Grinshill stone.

Entering by the chief entrance on the sea-front, we pass into the principal room of the ground floor—the dining hall, measuring 65 feet by 30 feet. Here prayers—attendance at which is not compulsory—are held every morning, breakfast, dinner, and tea are served, and the girls sign their names in the Hall book. On week-days there are two hours at which breakfast may be taken—8 a.m. or 8.45; dinner is served at 1.20, tea is

ance, affording suitable “dens” where on special occasions the girls may entertain their friends. Miss Carpenter, the Lady Principal, has her room on the first floor, next door to a well-stocked library, containing some six hundred volumes of standard literature—a feature of the establishment highly appreciated by the students and worthy of being emulated in other colleges devoted to girls. Nor are the requirements of modern hygiene neglected. The lavatory block is of the most approved construction, and—more important still—is only connected with the main building by means of a narrow cross-ventilated “bridge.” Great pains have also been

taken to secure adequate lighting, heating, and ventilation.

It is almost unnecessary to say that strict discipline is observed by the College authorities as to a rigid regard for the regulations, though those who have passed through the syllabus at Aberystwyth would, on careful consideration, be the last to decry the sense and justice of the rules. No one could possibly question the advisability of a rule which says that without the special permission of the Lady Principal, no student must be out (except for lectures) after 7.30 p.m. on week-days in winter, or after 8.30 p.m. on Sundays and in summer. But few girls would, it seems, wish to break this rule, even if they were so minded; for in winter evenings the promenade is usually a deserted spot, the town is dull and monotonous, and the wind is generally uncomfortably high. Besides all which there is a counter-attraction in the Hall itself. Invariably, a visitor who took a peep within on a cold winter's evening, would find some signs of entertainment, sensible recreation, and jovial companionship. Many of the girls are musical, and concerts are systematically organised; or there is a dramatic performance, a select party in one of the private studies, or a debate in a general study. One need never be dull. With the bracing air, the splendid surrounding hills, the excellent food and

pleasant association with pure and healthy girls, a student who felt—to use a popular expression—“out of it” at Aberystwyth would find it an almost impossible task to feel “in it” anywhere else.

In almost every department of learning included in the Welsh curriculum, the girl-students are given their lectures, as has been stated, with the male members of the University who reside in the town, and whose college proper is stationed at the other end of the parade, a noble granite block of buildings facing the Atlantic.

The students are required to attend the lectures, and in the science department, practical work, with trustworthy regularity; absence is not allowed without special permission from the professor or lecturer concerned. The reports furnished at the end of every session by the examiners and professors, show, beyond doubt, that deep interest and careful study is displayed throughout, while it is evident that all are happy in their work. In a word, the University of Wales has turned out some admirable specimens of bright and intelligent British girls—and girls who, let it be said, turn out excellent wives and devoted mothers. They have, in nearly all cases, gained, not lost, by untying in their teens the string which fixed them to their native hearth.



JUNE LOVE



THE ways are not of weeping,
The times are not of tears :
Green fields gleam far before us,
Blue skies lean lightly o'er us,
And nothing ripe for reaping
Within our sight appears.

Love's sowing time is ended—
The Spring, Sweetheart, is past—
When dimples and distresses,
Glad signs and sorry guesses,
Like sun and rain attended
The hope that flowers at last.

I think you feared at first, Sweet,
Lest love were nought at root.
Through March's calms and crashes,
And April's frowns and flashes,
I know I gently nursed, Sweet,
One shy and wayward shoot.

For love in Spring was new love—
And could our hearts descry
At dawn the strength of noontide,
In March the joy of June-tide?
But now 'tis tried and true love,
And dear until we die.

Our ways are not of weeping,
Our times are not of tears.
The fields may fail before us,
The skies bend burdened o'er us—
But love comes not to reaping
Till we are done with years.

J. J. BELL.



WRITTEN BY MRS. WILLIAM MAUDE. ILLUSTRATED BY
J. E. GILLINGWATER.

AWAY, away, out of turmoil and smoke, out of toil and dust and grime, to pine trees and roses, and peaceful yellow sands where sea-gulls circle and the salt foam flies from a turquoise sea—sea as blue as that which laps the shores of Monaco—in a word, out of London and Waterloo Station to Bournemouth! The girl in the train who was carried thus from heat and noise to cool and quiet, was herself good to look at, with red-brown hair, and eyes “like violets dipped in dew,” the poet said. He called her his “Princess.” She stepped into a fly at the East Station, beautiful, loveable—do not start, gentle reader, she was only Posie, of Raspberry Street—she blacked the poet’s boots with her own fair hands—Aunt Amelia’s “slavey” of the little house in Brompton.

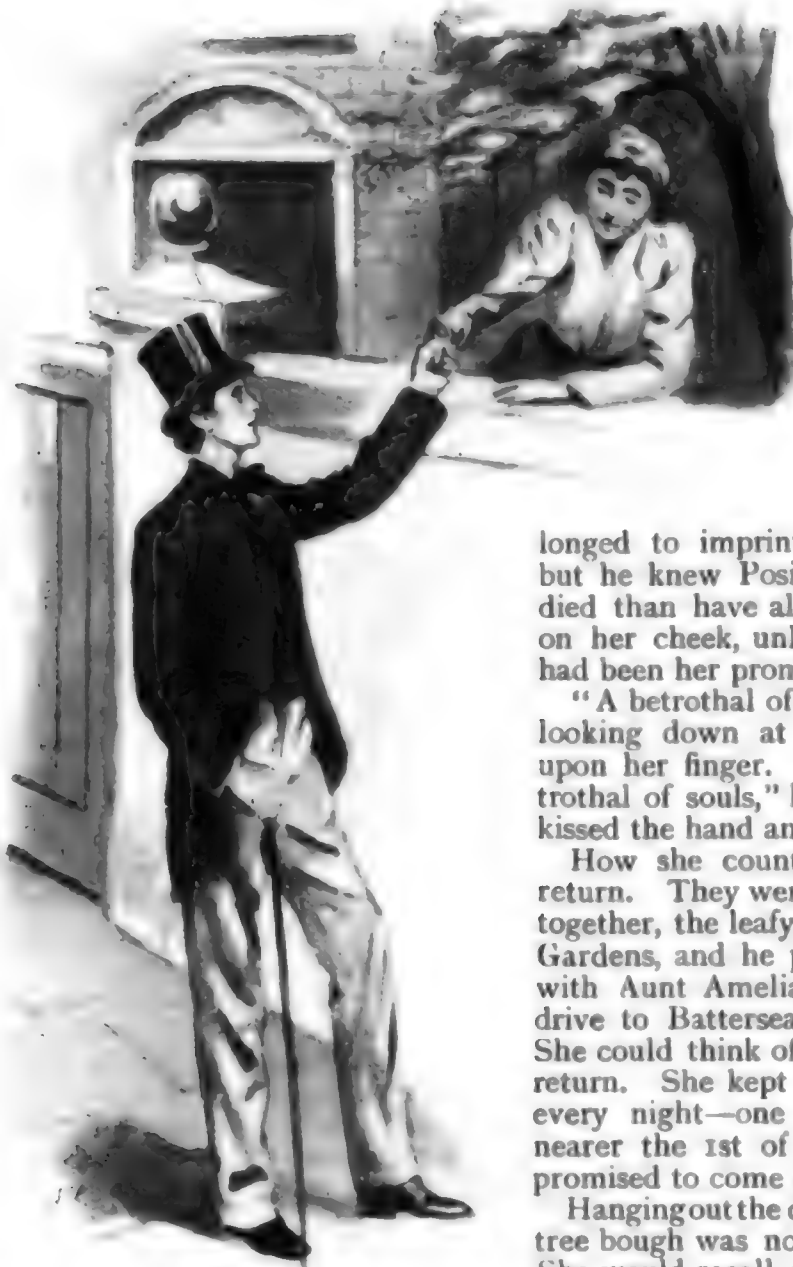
Her hands were as white as yours for all that, and the nails as beautiful, though her aunt did keep a lodging-house in Raspberry Street. A charwoman came once a week to do the scrubbing—the princess did the rest. They called her Posie. The poet said he loved the name, nothing suited her so well, and to him she was always “Princess Posie!” His name was Mr. Randall—the Honourable Robert Randall. Posie was only sixteen, she knew nothing of the world outside Raspberry Street—Raspberry Street, Michael’s Grove, not far from Brompton

Oratory. Posie’s aunt preferred “South Kensington” for the full address, she considered it more “genteel,” so she would have told you. You could not find Raspberry Street if you tried; it is a very quiet bye-lane somewhere near Michael’s Grove. Robert Randall found it, because he was a poet and was attracted by the almond blossoms above the wall. You seldom see an almond tree in London, and this one had a straight, low branch where Aunt Amelia hung “the small things” out to dry, on her “washing day.” It was precisely on such a day in March that the Honourable Robert Randall first came to Raspberry Street. “It is a poem all to itself,” he said. He meant the almond-tree. Unsullied as yet by London soot, it stretched its delicate blossoms across the grimy street, and Posie, unsullied too and “fancy free,” bent her rose-white face upon him. He asked for a blossom, and she gave him one, shyly, stiffly, over the garden wall.

“Maidens are poems,” he was beginning, when Aunt Amelia called, “Posie! Posie! I want you!” After that, Mr. Randall took rooms at Number Four, Raspberry Street, and Posie innocently dated all events from “when the Honourable came!”

“I knew he was a poet,” she would say; “we used to learn all that when I was at the Young Ladies’ Seminary at Penge.”

Posie had been sent to school for a



"HE ASKED FOR A BLOSSOM"

little while, but then came reverses. Aunt Amelia could not afford to keep a servant, and her niece had to take the "slavey's" place. Posie was an orphan, and Aunt Amelia was all the mother she knew.

One short year—he had only been with them a year—and everything was changed for Posie. And when, at last, towards the end of March, "the Honourable" went away, the almond tree was once again in blossom, and Posie's heart—her poor, inexperienced little heart—went away with him to Bournemouth.

He promised to return in the early summer. He could not long be separated from his princess, he said, and he gave her a tiny ring at parting—a ring with a heart of coral—a red heart that matched her lips," he told her. His fondly-whispered words brought the warm blushes to her face; it was a lovely face, and he

longed to imprint his farewell there, but he knew Posie would sooner have died than have allowed a man's kisses on her cheek, unless, indeed, that man had been her promised husband.

"A betrothal of souls," the poet said, looking down at the ring he placed upon her finger. "You and I; a betrothal of souls," he whispered, and he kissed the hand and the ring.

How she counted the days till his return. They were to walk in the parks together, the leafy glades of Kensington Gardens, and he promised to take her with Aunt Amelia to the theatre, and drive to Battersea to see the cycling. She could think of nothing else but his return. She kept a card to be pricked every night—one day gone, one day nearer the 1st of June, when he had promised to come again.

Hanging out the clothes on the almond-tree bough was now her happiest task. She would recall a hundred times how first they met, how he had stood there looking and looking up into her eyes. Over the wall, under the pink and white blossom, how much she grew to love the almond tree.

Posie grew dreamy—she was always dreaming now—pondering his words, the poems, all the conversations they had had together since first he came.

In those early days of their acquaintance she had asked him, "Are all poets called Honourable?" and he had answered, "No, but they ought to be, my princess."

"And you?" she asked, her wide, innocent eyes fixed upon him with a

kind of breathless wonder. "Are you very rich and great that you bear this noble title?"

The poet passed his delicate fingers through his hair—shapely and refined they were, and tipped with "filbert" nails. Posie felt the glamour of those fingers when they touched her as of some electric shock. The long hair he wore curling upon his forehead fell back under his white hand. "I am not rich or great," he said sadly; "I am not even the eldest son, nor a poet, only a very poor rhymster." And he spoke truly, but Posie took it to signify his great humility, and her admiration for him increased.

The summer days passed and deepened and widened, from glowing June to hot July, but the poet never came. But surely he would be faithful to his promise.

The time came for one of Aunt Amelia's visits to Shepherd's Bush. Her only sister lived there, and once a year she would go to visit her, and afterwards take Posie to Margate; this was the only treat Aunt Amelia ever allowed herself. It took place in August, when excursion trains make travelling cheap. Posie had been accustomed to look forward to this treat with intense delight. Only a Londoner can rightly appreciate the pure sea-air after the tainted atmosphere of the streets. But all was changed. Posie was only waiting feverishly for "the Honourable's" return; she cared nothing but for him, no treat could satisfy her in his absence. She carried his ring in the bosom of her cotton frock; she did not mean to be deceitful, but "Aunt Amelia" would frown perhaps—and this was too sacred for her eyes, too precious to be lightly relinquished.

"It's strange the Honourable never writing," said Aunt Amelia one day, "for your real gentleman has always consideration. And, 'I return certainly by the first of June,' he says, just stepping into the cab. Well," she continued thoughtfully, "now the old lady has gone from the dining-room floor, I shall feel at liberty to run off to Aunt Eliza, for she's poorly and presses me to stay the week. Be sure, Posie, if any one calls, to show them the drawing-room floor. I'll take twenty-five, see-

ing we've come to the middle of July, and the season nearly done. I'm pretty sure the Honourable will not return at present. Good gracious, child!" Aunt Amelia was short-sighted and she ran now to the front windows, "if you haven't taken down the card! What did you do that for?" The guilty princess blushed a vivid red.

"Oh, it's fallen, I declare!" and Aunt Amelia, all unobservant, stooped to raise the card from the floor, where "Apartments to Let," was reposing against the green iron frame of a flower-stand, where a few geraniums, carefully tended, lent colour to the dingy room.

"It's not likely the Honourable will return now. You look tired, child." If Posie had been red before, she was now quite white, and looked ready to faint.

"Margate sands," Aunt Amelia continued, "will make another girl of you. I will try and get your Aunt Eliza off earlier this year."

"Oh no, please not—not for me!" gasped poor Posie. "I—I think, perhaps, it is only the heat."

"Of course it is only the heat, but you want sea-breezes to strengthen you up," said kind Aunt Amelia. She bustled about more than ever. She must start early for Shepherd's Bush.

"Take some walks, child, be sure and lock up the house. Mammy Jefson will come and sleep as usual. You will find the keys under my blotter and a form ready written in case the Honourable returns, which I don't think he will. But it's strange—I hope he's not ill, poor young gentleman, the influenza so much about. Wire, Posie, should he return unexpectedly, I shall require a wire, it's only sixpence and it saves time."

When the hour for starting came Posie kissed her aunt dutifully, and Aunt Amelia, seeing the sad look in her eyes, said good-naturedly, "Don't mope indoors. You may finish up the potted shrimps, they won't keep this hot weather." Posie tried to smile gratefully, knowing Aunt Amelia regarded such things as the very apple of her eye, but when the cab had turned the corner she sat down on the stairs and her tears fell fast. She thought her thoughts aloud. "Perhaps he's dead!" she said.

"Not 'ee!" It was Mammy Jefson's voice, she spoke emphatically. "Folk don't die so easy! The young genelman wasn't strong as some," she added meditatively, "it's true!"

"Oh dear! oh dear!" sobbed Posie now fairly unstrung, "if he should die, and never come back!"

Even a charwoman can give comfort, and this one was an old friend.

"If 'ee 'asn't written," continued Posie's comforter, "you may be sure 'ee will, there's h'every 'ope of it. Men h'is skittish, take the best of 'em, we must look for it in 'em, the Lord knows 'ow they're made! Don't you fret h'arter this one, Miss Posie, if 'ee never come back, there's plenty o' fish in the sea what this 'un come out of!"

Mammy Jefson's very thick voice ceased abruptly, as the girl suddenly started up and reached down her hat from its peg on the wall. "Where-h'ever be you goin'?" asked Mammy.

"I'm going to look after the poet, he must be ill; if he was well he would have written," returned Posie feverishly.

"There's a train, I can catch it. Call me a cab, Mammy, there's a dear, please do, Mammy! Oh!" Her voice broke into a sob. "I must go to him to Bournemouth."

Mammy Jefson's jaw dropped.

"What! go to Bournemouth?" she almost shrieked. "Well, I never!"

The princess was pinning on her hat in eager haste.

"Lor', What h'ever will your h'aunt h'Amelia say? You'd best wait and write him a letter, my dear."

Posie's only answer was to run upstairs and hastily push a few things into a little hand-bag that stood on the dusty drawers. She took no heed of Mammy Jefson's earnest expostulations, when with slow and heavy tread that worthy followed her to the top of the house.

"I shall only be gone a day or two," said Posie, with a very red face. Her tears were gone, dried up by the excitement that possessed her. The weary uncertainty would be over at last, she should see him—see her lover and know for herself if he were alive or dead.

"Oh, Mammy dear, keep my secret, till I come back! Aunt Amelia won't

be cross when she hears, when she knows." Posie's voice faltered. "She can't scold when I tell her myself and ask her pardon! And the house won't run away, you'll see after it Mammy! O Mammy dear, you were always good and kind. I think my heart will break, at least it would break if I did not go to him—him ill, dead perhaps." She threw her arms round Mammy's neck.

"Dead wouldn't do no good," said the charwoman staring vaguely into Posie's face. "Lor' my dear, I don't want to contain you" (Mammy was Mrs. Malaprop on occasion) "but this 'ere won't do! Sweet'earting didn't ought to be carried on this fashion, you running off like a mad thing and 'im nobody knows where! Oh my dear, my dear!" The charwoman's intense agitation caused Posie real surprise.

"Why, what does it matter?" she asked innocently. "I've got three pounds ten, all my own, and if I spend it as I like best, who's to mind? Auntie said I might do as I liked about that new summer frock."

"It'll be to ruin you body and soul! Oh my dear, oh my Lord!" Mammy, unable to find words to express her feelings, sank down upon the one chair the room contained, and burst into tears.

They dropped upon the rusty black dress she wore, and she wiped them away with the back of her coarse red hand. Suddenly she left off rocking herself in the chair, and caught hold of the princess. "Give over, Miss Posie, do, and come round to dinner at h'our place. We'll 'ave winkles and h'Albert'll be ever so pleased—'ee's 'ad a bad night, 'ee 'ave, and your comin'll do 'im a sight o' good, Miss Posie, there's a honey! Yer won't go to break all our 'earts, lambie?"

At the mention of the poor crippled lad Posie's mobile mouth twitched. "Give him the potted shrimps," she said; "they will be a treat, and, oh, there's a jar of honey at the back of the cupboard, it's three-parts full, he may have the honey too. Good-bye, Mammie!"

"Why if that h'isn't h'Albert comin'!

now on 'is crutches just at the corner of the Grove," cried Mammy. She mounted the chair in order to take a better view of her first-born, and down the stairs went Posie.

Before the charwoman with her slow gait could stop her, Posie had crossed the pavement and was climbing into a hansom crawling leisurely by.

"To Waterloo!" she cried, "and drive quick, very quick."

The cabman whipped up his horse, and Posie was carried out of sight, leaving Mammy Jefson on the pavement helplessly wringing her hands.

Just for a moment the girl felt a twinge of remorse, but the rapid motion and the knowledge that she was going to see her beloved poet and find out for herself the cause of his non-arrival banished every other thought. She would nurse him, "see after him," save him if she died in the doing of it. Posie's love at sixteen was a woman's love, unselfish, self-sacrificing.

"Bournemouth? Yes, 12.30—five minutes," said the porter laconically.

At the end of that time Posie found herself, oh joy! actually steaming right out of Waterloo Station, away from London and its prosaic toil, to the poet's "City of a Dream." So he had been wont to call Bournemouth, and he would describe the turquoise sea and the glowing sunsets and the yellow sands. "My princess, you have not seen the ocean shores in their real beauty," he used to say, "till you have seen Bournemouth."

The princess could scarcely believe her good fortune when, at last, she stood on the platform of a wide lofty station. "Bournemouth East," the porters called it, but to her it was the gate of Paradise, a gate of new hopes and unfathomed joy.

But just as she took her seat in the fly, a strange fear took possession of her. What if he should be very ill, perhaps dead? How should she bear it all alone? Surely he would have written to her long ago, if illness had not stayed his hand. She was very certain of the poet's faithful affection, hers was no common lover. He who wrote so well of purity and goodness, could not in himself be faithless, could he? How

good he was, how full of reverence. He had accompanied her sometimes to the Oratory, he had knelt, oh how reverently, in the corner of the tiny back garden in Raspberry Street, where a broken statue of the Blessed Virgin partook of the general sootiness and grime of Brompton. Posie did not believe that "men is skittish," as Mammy Jefson said. What could a charwoman know?

But if it were true, this one, her hero, her poet, was an exception. She recalled how they had read together his own beautiful poem called "Faith and Despair."

"Faith in One," in "one only" like Tennyson's *Idyl*; but this, the poet said, is a new version of an old song, the old theme the gods delight in. Oh joy and youth and youth and love, must there always be an awakening?

Her heart beat fast, the colour came and went upon her face as she drove towards the place where he would be found stretching out welcoming arms to receive her.

The houses to right and left—the little houses of "villadom"—had every one a garden of sweet flowers. They filled the air with with fragrance, every other was a bower of green where roses wandered. She passed under the sweet-scented pines. The hot July sun came gently through a dark screen overhead. She was driving along the road that leads towards Boscombe. It seemed to her that everywhere—on either hand—were gardens of delight. A row of tall houses screened the view of the sea, but through the gaps between the sky looked down, the sun shining in its strength; so wonderful it seemed to town-bred Posie it almost took away her breath. She who rejoiced in the unsullied blossoms of her one almond-tree and felt the majestic beauty of the smoke-dried foliage in Kensington, what fascination awaited her here, in Bournemouth the "Riviera" of England.

All at once the driver stopped. With burning cheeks the happy princess alighted. She gave the fare—an extravagant payment and she knew it—but she trod on air, and gladly would she have paid double to let this poor coachman share her joy. The Bournemouth

cab-driver has a soul above dishonesty. "Eighteenpence is the fare, Miss," he said, politely tendering a shilling in exchange for her timid half-crown.

"Oh, never mind," returned the deluded princess, whom joy had rendered

either side the path that led to the house, there was no carriage drive. This then—was the poet's house—this his little home in the "City of a Dream." Timid Posie advanced up the narrow path—is not love always timid? The



"THEN SHE GAVE A LITTLE CRY"

reckless; "perhaps you have a wife and children, please keep it!" The driver thanked her and drove off, leaving her standing before a little green gate, on which was written in very white letters, "Grassmeadow Cottage." Flaming red "pokers," stocks and peas stood up on

gate and the lawn, and the shrubs tangled with convolvulus, she would remember those white convolvulus bells all her life! It was everywhere dim and shady and green. Posie's hand, holding her shabby black bag, trembled. Her lover was so great it frightened her.

The bag slipped from her hand upon the gravel.

Then she gave a little cry, for there on a peg within the open door, was a straw hat—his hat—a blue ribbon about the crown. She could not mistake, she had sewn on the ribbon—how many months ago?—and pricked her finger in the doing of it, and he? Ah, he had “kissed the place to make it well!” She stood staring, oblivious of everything but her lover. She even forgot to ring the bell, and stood there gazing. A woman in a primrose-coloured blouse—a coarse-featured, loud-voiced woman—came to the open door. Her curled yellow fringe was in startling contrast to her dark eyes and black eyebrows. Posie, suddenly startled out of her dreaming, could only falter, “Is he here, is he well?” This person did not look sad or sorry, so no doubt the poet was better, at least. But instead of the expected bulletin, the golden-haired woman laughed. She said, with a faint tinge of mockery about her lips, “If you mean Mr. Randall, he’s not at home.”

Poor little Posie could only repeat, “Not at home!”

The woman was looking at her suspiciously.

“He lives here,” gasped Posie, “doesn’t he live here?”

“Yes. He lives here when he’s at home—he’s away just now!”

The girl’s slender figure wavered slightly, like a thing struck by the wind. “Has he been ill, very ill?—is he well again?” She asked incoherently.

“Oh quite well, as far as I know. We’re not so often favoured by his presence now, my husband and I—we don’t see him of late, or maybe I could tell you better as regards his health.” Again she laughed that unpleasant laugh.

“Can I give any name?” She asked curiously. “He’ll be back in a day or two, I dare say.”

“No, no name,” said Posie drearily, “but I will call—I will call in a day or two.” The woman eyed her keenly, and the scarlet sprang into the girl’s face beneath that bold gaze. Then the princess walked away, between the white-wreathed shrubs. Oh, she would

remember those pale trumpet bells, all her life! She passed out of the little green gate, it shut behind her and carrying her small shabby bag, she went up the road under the pine-trees.

The loud woman laughed again, and the coarse notes seemed to mar the summer stillness of the afternoon. So, he was well, and away! He had not come to her. She was forgotten! Was it only a dream? The poet and his love and his faithful affection, all gone, evaporated in thin air like a bubble that has burst. The princess walked on and on, she cared not where.

Love and light and joy had fled. After awhile—she kept no count of time—she sank down upon a seat,—there are wooden benches scattered here and there under the trees by the wayside. The sun sent its low, warm rays upon her head. She must find some resting-place for the night. The thought roused her, she turned back a little way and found a narrow row of houses each with a garden before it. At one of these she engaged a room, and drank her tea in the small front parlour facing a straggling line of pines, glowing now with the crimson light of the setting sun.

“I will wait a day or two,” she said, and hope whispered, “Yes, wait!”

“I want yer, ma’ honey, yes I want yer—
Yes a doo!”

Nigger men were singing near the sea, and children were laughing, and the grown-up folk chattering and eating on the sands beside the pier. And the princess was there too. Another day had come, and with its dawn, hope grew strong, and stronger every hour. Hope told her she had despaired too soon. He had business—gentlemen always have business—he was away—gone to London, was even now at Raspberry Street, and hearing from Mammy Jefson how she, his princess, had run off “like a mad thing” to find him, would hurry back to Bournemouth; and—stupid Posie!—she had not left name or address at Grassmeadow Cottage. As soon as this thought presented itself, the poor little thing lost all pleasure in the gay scene upon the sands. He would come—she must not delay—all would be well. The pier in the morning light

shone like gold, and the water caught the flashes, silver and red and bronze, of a steamer coming to the pier-side, the people went clattering along, while the clocks far and near struck the hour. Posie eat currant buns under the pier's deep shadow. She was young and eat with a hearty, healthy appetite, even while she thought upon her lover. She made her paper bag into a cocked hat, and set it to sail for a boat, where some bare-footed children were scooping out the sand with their little wooden spades. They laughed when the sea rushed in and filled their tiny pond, and Posie laughed with them. The sea-breeze gave colour to her cheeks, and made her eyes dance. Some sailors passing, turned to look at her; they looked twice before they moved away.

"Violets dipped in dew!" the poet had said. Posie's innocent vanity took pleasure in the thought—not that any passing vulgar admiration could content her; she had but one real lover, and all the world beside was as dross to her little faithful heart. It was then, when the paper boat was sailing, and the children were laughing, the thought came! She started to her feet, the hasty, impetuous princess, and set off running to Grass-meadow Cottage. It was there she must leave her address in case the poet came.

The sun was tense, and the heat too great, as she crossed the burning sands, but there were shadows under the pines—wide, cool ways, where the warm air carried balmy scents to meet the tired child. The fragrance of roses came with the incense of the pines; there were roses everywhere; on the walls and about the low verandahs; every rustic porch was a bower. Red and white and cream climbing the roofs, and tossing tender arms round the stern straight pines, like a fragile lady about her stern lord, wreathing his neck with beauty. The princess stopped before the green gate amongst laurels and convolvulus. A postman came out while she stood there; the gate shut after him with a click. The girl's colour came and went—her heart beat high with hope. Only for a moment; the next, her face was as white as the convolvulus—her hands

clenched! The yellow-haired woman was talking to her little maid, and the princess heard.

"She is here; he is staying with her in Bournemouth."

"Who?"

"Why, our Mr. Randall!"

"What? going to be married?"

"Yes, quite soon!"

A stifled cry of pain, and then some one turned and ran away from under the laurel hedge down the road to the sea. The climbing roses were swinging their white wreaths above her head, the cool pine-trees sent forth their incense to the sun—it was still the poet's "City of a Dream," but for her all was changed. She saw nothing of its beauty, her heart was swelling with misery. She could not bear it, she told herself, and her breast heaving with sobs, she went and cast herself down on the smooth sand of the sea-shore. She could never have told you how long she stayed there overwhelmed with grief. The afternoon wore away. The sun went down, and a shining staircase led to his glittering chamber of rest, little steps of gold made by the waves that gently rose and fell in the summer calm.

"I loved you!" she said aloud; "I loved you, and you have thrown away my love!"

Splash, splash, the golden staircase lapped the sand.

"If you had not deceived me—if you had not promised to come back! Now you have broken my heart!"

She lay there hour after hour, her head in her hands, her hands buried in the yellow sand, her face shut out from the light. In the hour of her disappointment she did not pause to ask, Was it well for him? Would it have been well for both, this unequal marriage? She did not ask the question, but lay in impotent rage fighting against fate—fate that, in darkest shape, comes straight from our Father's hand, and is permitted for our greater good. The poor child lay prone upon the earth, while the sun drew his golden ladder after him, lighting all the west with fire-works; arches of yellow and vermillion flushed the sky ere he dipped into the sea.

The moon rose and the waves were

turned from gold to silver, and still the child lay moaning; her hair that had been golden in the sunset, clung in damp, dark coils about her bowed head; her hands were clenched in anguish.

A step, muffled on the sand, came to where she lay, a shadow intercepted the white moon-rays, making a black line over her.

"Why do you lie here?" asked a man's voice; "Is anything wrong? Are you ill?" The tones were harsh and abrupt. Joe Arundale was always abrupt when he was shy, and he was shy now. "Can I do anything for you?" he asked nervously. He had seen the prostrate woman's form, and walking as quickly as he could, arrived panting. The princess sat up and stared blankly before her. She pushed the damp hair from her forehead, and looked about her. With a groan she relapsed into her former attitude, her face to the earth. The look she gave him was one of such intense misery, the stony stare of blank despair, the young man felt absolutely afraid. "Can I do anything for you?" he asked again, and laid his hand timidly on her dress. Still she did not move. She wailed out at last, "Nothing!—nobody can help me ever, ever again!" Perhaps the mournful sound of her own voice brought the full misery of it all before her; perhaps the kind words repeated, "Let me help you!" brought the tears. She began to weep, loud and long, violent uncontrolled sobs. Like a torrent the tears came rushing between her slender fingers that strove to keep them back, dripping like pearl-drops in the moon's white light. Is there anything too costly to be named by the side of a woman's broken heart?

Though she did not know it, those tears would purchase her life-long happiness. The faithless poet would have called them "diamonds." This young man had no poetical imaginings, but his heart was moved to pity, and a compassionate longing to help.

She spoke between her sobs like a tired child that tells its story. "If he had told me, I should not have minded—at least, I should always have minded, but I could have borne it better than—than this!" Her red lips quivered.

She hid her face in her hands. He turned his head away. He would not look. To him a woman's grief was sacred. "Why did he say he loved me? Oh, why are people cruel, and say things and not mean them?" She had sat up for awhile, and now she threw herself again upon the sand. The night had come. A little breeze moaned to the sea. It seemed to him the sea and the night cried out against the injustice of man. "Don't," he said again, he could think of nothing better to say; "you will hurt yourself, if you cry so!" She looked into his face and a torrent of words broke. "I used to do everything for him, all the year round; it is over a year since he came to us. He would not me let lift heavy trays, he would do it himself, he would carry the coals for his fire and take the tray out of my hands. He said I was never to do it while he was there,—oh, he was a gentleman, a real, true gentleman and a poet too—" She broke off suddenly. "He was our lodger, you know?"

"Yes."

"He used to read to me—that was beautiful—at his breakfast-time."

The young man listened attentively. He was intensely interested. He pitied the beautiful girl, he would like to have kicked the man, the man who had forsaken her!

"One day," she went on, "he gave me a ring, I used to take it out and look at it of nights,—by candle-light when I could, by moonlight when I had not enough candle left to burn, and it was when the almond-tree was in blossom again—like when he first came to our house and asked for a flower off it, that he gave me the ring. 'The betrothal of souls' he called it, and he threw back his head when he said it—just so—and his eyes looked, oh, so thrilling!" She imitated the gesture, and the moonlight fell on her round throat and little ears like shells under the hair that nestled about her neck.

A groan came from Joe Arundale as he listened.

She turned quite away from him again and cast herself down once more in the utter abandonment of grief. "Nobody can do nothing ever again!" The ungrammatical sentence went straight to

to the young man's heart. He stood there powerless to help, looking on and pitying her grief.

"Don't, don't!" he said at last, putting out a hand and touching her.

"Are you still there?" she asked pettishly. "Why don't you go?"

"You will hurt yourself," he said, as he had said before.

"What does it matter to you, if I do? There is only Aunt Amelia to care."

"But I care, I don't want you to be ill—please stop crying!"

"Why do you care?" She asked staring.

The young man, he was not yet twenty-five, fixed a pair of honest grey-blue eyes on her tear-stained face.

"I care for any woman in trouble, I suppose everybody cares then." He answered with simple directness, he did not take note of her beauty, her dark-fringed eyes and clear cut oval face—Joe cared little for beauty, he looked for the soul within.

"Oh, how I loved him!"

The girl upon the sand had begun to moan again and rock herself to and fro in the extremity of her woe. He had tears in the eyes he averted from her, and softly under his breath he murmured, "*Consolatrix Afflictorum!*" The whispered prayer reached her. "Are you a Catholic?" she asked in slow surprise.

"Yes."

"Oh! I did not know." She said it so simply, he smiled.

"You do not know very much about me, not even my name," he said. "I was asking the Mother of God, the consoler of the afflicted, to pray for you!" and already something of the balm for which he asked had fallen on the poor tempest-tossed soul. After a pause he said, "You must go home."

"I have no home; I am all alone!"

"Alone at night in Bournemouth!" Only those who know, can understand the terrible significance of those words. "A girl alone!" he repeated. Then meeting her dazed eyes, "You have a lodging?—rooms where you slept last night?"

"Yes." She tried to rise, but, stiff and cold, fell back. He helped her to her feet. "Good-bye," she faltered, "you have been kind—you are kind

—and I am going, because you tell me."

"Good-bye!" Like an obedient child she turned and went. Respectfully he raised his hat, then stood to watch her go. How tall she was! He was no taller, their eyes, had been on a level when she stood. He would like to have touched the little cold hands that trembled so, as she stooped to pick up her straw hat where it had fallen. But his respect forbade him. A woman alone.

Then he saw her stagger. He was by her side in a moment. "You are ill," he said; "let me go with you."

"No, only tired—so tired." He did not offer her his arm. She did not ask it. In silence, walking apart, they left the sands and reached the level road. A few minutes more and they came to a little row of houses where the girl lodged. "The third, where the gate is a-jar, that is mine," she said wearily, "good-night."

"I will not go, I will wait here, under the lamp-post to see that the door is opened. If you do not come back, I shall know you are safe."

She did not come back.

The days passed. As the slow hours went by he grew restless.

The little white throat, the rounded cheeks pale with despair, haunted him. Of such as these suicides are made! Could she, in her misery, ever fall so low? Could those innocent eyes, the eyes that had gazed so fearlessly into his, the dark lashes heavy with tears—could they be closed even now in death, and the childish, too slender woman's form lie stiff and stark on a cold mortuary slab? "*Consolatrix Afflictorum,*" pray for her and such as her whose hearts are crushed by wrong and sorrow. He wandered restlessly near the little house, he waited on the sands, three miserable days. At last, on the third, when his holiday was over, he found her. She was sitting, her hands clasped about her knees, looking out to sea. The dim light of evening showed the curve of her red lips, the glory of her hair beneath her hat, where a wreath of wayside flowers made a shade for her baby face and weary eyes. She did not start as he drew near, she

scarcely turned her head. "I have been ill," she said, "they would not let me go; it was a chill, caught that evening by the sea."

"And you are well again?" He ventured nearer to her.

"Yes."

"And your flowers, they speak of the country."

"I went into the lanes to get them. I said I would not see the sands again, never again! But you see I am come. To-morrow I am going back to London, I do not want my Aunt to know. To-morrow I shall be gone."

"I too am going," he spoke timidly, and added after a moment's silence. "Yes, you are right. You had better go home to London."

"I have said I am going," she answered pettishly. "Won't you leave me alone?"

He walked away then without another word. What was she to him that he should trouble? What did he know or care about her that such remorseful misery should stab his heart? He was taking her at her word, and leaving her. The sun had quite gone. It was just such a night as that other, only there was no moon. A clear starlight sky looked down on the princess sitting by the sea. Posie felt as if she could not bear it. The stars in their brightness mocked her misery. She turned to go from under their glitter, she would leave the stars and the silver, laughing waves, she had no part in their gladness. Some men were looking out to sea, a group of sailors waiting expectant. Looking where they looked, she saw a little pleasure boat making for the shore. It was decorated with Chinese lanterns, she wondered she had not noticed its light before; like a fairy thing it came gliding out of the darkness, the oars went splashing in time to the music of people singing to a guitar. The dim light shrouded Posie's slender form, and as she stood gazing, a voice made itself heard that sent the blood rushing and leaping to her heart. Her first thought was to run away, to run anywhere, to put miles and miles between herself and the poet who had forgotten her, but the next instant she resolved to stay and see him; only once

to hear his voice again was heaven, her heaven, poor little child.

A song came thrilling mysteriously over the waters, the stars twinkled overhead, they turned mocking eyes upon the silly child, so it seemed to her. She stood rooted to the spot, concealed behind an upturned boat that lent its friendly shelter.

In the uncertain light under the swinging lanterns the people in the boat looked vague and dark. Women's voices mingled in rippling laughter as the men dragged the boat out of the waves upon the sands. A girl, slim and young as herself, dressed in white with a crown of daisies on her head—yes, she could see the golden marguerites gleam—stepped lightly on shore—and then, the form she had looked and thirsted for, the man she loved, stood before the sad princess unconscious of her presence.

"You should wait for me to help you, Dora," the poet said in the tender caressing accents she knew so well. The girl he called "Dora," how fair, how beautiful she looked, standing so near, so close to the man Posie loved. The forsaken princess could almost have touched the girl's dress.

"When we are married you will be a tyrant," Dora said, laughing, and the girl in the shadow heard, heard and did not faint or cry—not yet!

"Yes, when we are married," the poet repeated in those soft tones of love, and he took the fair girl's hand in both his own. "Mine—all mine!" he said very low into her ear. The exultant whisper pierced the silence as an arrow cleaving the air—it found its mark in a woman's heart! The hidden princess shivered as though she had been stabbed, and like some wounded creature done to death, threw up her arms to the skies. A little rustling sound, a dull thud as of something fallen—that was all!

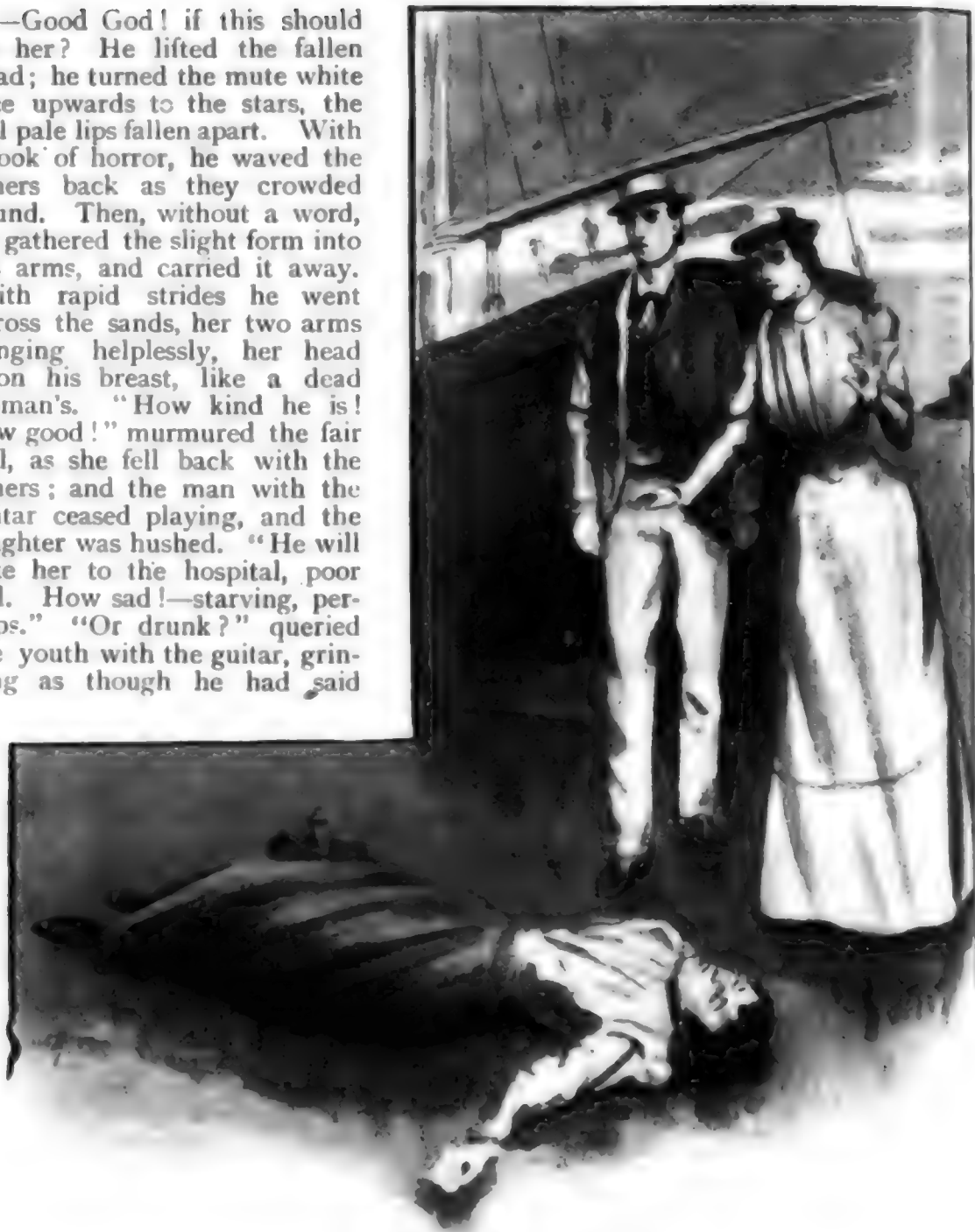
The fair girl made a step forward, and the poet with her.

"What is it?" asked the girl, "Oh! what is it?"

Two white arms in the shadows where the sleeves fell back, great coils of auburn hair showing dark in the starlight.

The poet gave an exclamation of dismay. Something reminded him of

—Good God! if this should be her? He lifted the fallen head; he turned the mute white face upwards to the stars, the full pale lips fallen apart. With a look of horror, he waved the others back as they crowded round. Then, without a word, he gathered the slight form into his arms, and carried it away. With rapid strides he went across the sands, her two arms hanging helplessly, her head upon his breast, like a dead woman's. "How kind he is! how good!" murmured the fair girl, as she fell back with the others; and the man with the guitar ceased playing, and the laughter was hushed. "He will take her to the hospital, poor girl. How sad!—starving, perhaps." "Or drunk?" queried the youth with the guitar, grinning as though he had said



"OH, WHAT IS IT?" ASKED THE GIRL

something witty; but the look the fair girl turned upon him was more scathing than words.

The walk with that dead weight upon his arms over the yielding sand was agony to Robert Randall—a slow torture, while her poor face lay close to his, and the fringe of her innocent eyes showed

darkly on the soft outline of her cheeks.

"Princess Posie" here! Posie in Bournemouth!—How? • Why? He had no time to ask. He left her at the Victoria Hospital—giving double fare to the cabman to drive quickly. He saw the nurse himself. He would have

undertaken all expenses, but the hospital is free. "Take care of her," he said; "her aunt will be here to-morrow. I am going to wire at once. She will be here without fail."

By good fortune the telegraph office was not closed, and the message was sent. "So distressed about the strange woman—so unnerved—kind, dear man!" said the fair Dora, "What a tender heart my Robert has!"

When the poor princess awoke at last from her deathly swoon, she learnt from the nurse that the gentleman who had brought her to the hospital had telegraphed to her relations. Her aunt would be here in a few hours. And so, a little later, the poor child was taken back to London. Weak and sorrowing, she crossed the threshold of her

aunt's home, not greatly caring whether she lived or died.

Mammy Jefson cried; Aunt Amelia wept in sympathy; the loud scolding begun ended in sobs! Posie had been deceitful—had concealed her love for her aunt's lodger—had run away from home, and in spite of it all, Aunt Amelia was full of genuine condolence, blaming herself, good soul, for having left her wilful little niece too much to her own devices. The outcome of it all was that Aunt Amelia made a resolution—and kept it—never to receive "gentlemen lodgers" in Raspberry Street. Posie was forgiven. Soon after this two maiden ladies came to establish a studio on Aunt Amelia's drawing-room floor. Posie's life-story was not ended. The girl, in her wild, passionate grief,



"STOOD LOOKING, NOT AT THE PICTURE, BUT AT HER"

had thought life's joys were over, when in truth they were only about to begin. She learnt to love the gentle occupants of the ex-Honourable's rooms, and was by them initiated into the mysteries of oil-painting. They persuaded Aunt Amelia to allow her young niece to accompany them on students' days to the Kensington Museum. Posie — poor storm-tossed little girl—found in the calm, passionless saints and sweet Madonnas no mere works of art, but living pictures of holy prayer and meditation. One evening, about three months after the studio had been established, Posie stood before a "Madonna and Child" in the Kensington Gallery. She was no longer the poet's forsaken "princess"; a change had come over her since she awoke from that swoon a year ago, on the Bournemouth sands. Was it only a year? She was a woman now with a woman's passionate regret. Her girlhood had passed from her for ever under the stars by the quiet sea. "*Consolatrix*

afflictorum!" A man's voice spoke the words. Joe Arundale stood looking not at the picture but at her: "Have you forgotten me?" he asked.

* * * *

There came a day when the almond-tree all wreathed in glory, showered its pink blossoms on two happy people. Aunt Amelia declared it to be the happiest day of her life, the morning on which Joe Arundale asked Princess Posie to be his wife.

"I know I am not handsome," he said humbly; "my hair is red——"

"No, no, golden!" she interrupted him.

"My eyes are not dark and thrilling. I am only a banker's clerk. I can't write verses like the poet——"

"Oh!" The princess held up her hand to stop him: "I don't want to remember."

"Can you put up with such a plain fellow, my dear?"

She did not say "No."



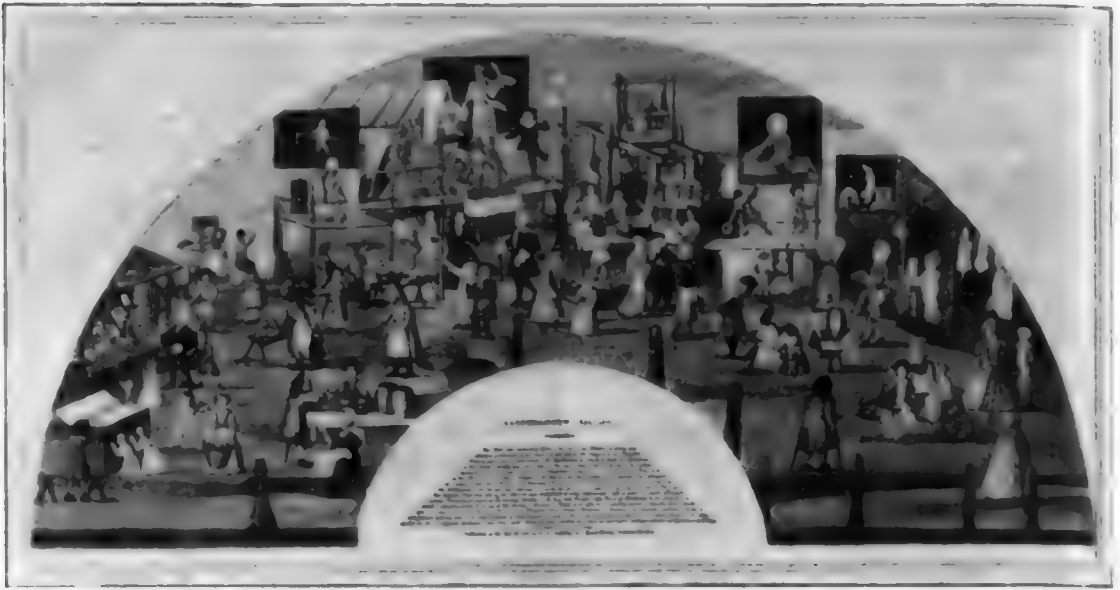
Old London Fairs

WRITTEN BY MILLICENT WEDMORE. ILLUSTRATED BY PHOTOGRAPHS
FROM OLD PRINTS

THE origin of fairs is to be found in "wakes," or assemblies of those who waked not in vain, let us hope, keeping vigil in church on the eve of saints' days. Pedlars attending to sell their wares, crowding and rioting followed, till such assemblies were forbidden, except in certain places where magistrates presided, and which were, for that reason, privileged to hold them under royal charters.

Bartholomew Fair, the greatest of those held in London, gave its name to a play of Ben Jonson's, first acted in 1614 by "the Lady Elizabeth's servants," no scene in which, however, would not have been as suitable to any fair as to that of Smithfield. Pepys speaks of seeing it on the spot with puppets. The original charter of Bartholomew Fair was granted by Henry I., in 1133, to his late jester, Rahere, prior, since ten years, of St. Bartholomew's Church, and founder of the hospital. This worthy Augustinian might have been seen, one day, filling the stall of Chamberlayne's Wood in St. Paul's Cathedral, and the next, if it chanced to be the feast of St. Bartholomew, figuring as a juggler at the fair, and enriching the convent treasury by his one day's return to the old life and the old merry skill. In 1295 some of the monks were arrested and thrown into the Tun Prison, in Cornhill, by the City authorities, who were indignant at the prior maintaining that the tolls of the fair should be paid into the Exchequer, as the privileges of the City

had become forfeit to the Crown. The King released the monks, but confirmed the privileges of the City. The fair was opened by the Lord Mayor, who would proceed to Smithfield in great state, where his attorney read a proclamation at the gate leading into Cloth Fair, a sheriff's officer repeating it after him. The procession, which included the sheriffs and aldermen, then "walked the fair," saw a wrestling match, and returned "through Chepe" to the Mansion House, where those of his lordship's household dined together at the sword-bearer's table. On these occasions Long Lane would put out its best clothes, public raffling and gaming went on in the cloisters of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, while those of Christ Church were gay with pictures. The second day of the fair there was shooting, and, on the third, hunting in Moorfields. Pepys, on the shooting day of 1663, writes:—"This noon, going to the Exchange, I met a fine fellow with trumpets before him in Leadenhall Street, and, upon enquiry, I find that he is the clerke of the City Market; and three or four men carried each of them an arrow of a pound weight in their hands. . . . And this officer, of course, is to perform this ceremony of riding through the City, I think, to proclaim or challenge any to shoot." In August, 1667, he writes—"I to Bartholomew Fayre to walk up and down, and there, among other things, find my Lady Castlemaine at a puppet-play (Patient



BARTHOLOMEW FAIR, 1721

Grizill), and the street full of people expecting her coming out." It was Lady Castlemaine, upon whom Pepys "did look long" on another occasion at the playhouse, observing that she continued a great beauty. In 1668 he took his wife to Bartholomew Fair with Mersa and Deb (apparently two servants) "and there did see a ridiculous little stage-play called 'Mary Audrey,' a foolish thing, but seen by everybody; and so to Jacob Hall's dancing of the ropes — a thing worth seeing, and mightily followed." Jacob Hall, the famous rope-dancer, was said to have received a salary from Lady Castlemaine, who was evidently a frequenter of Bartholomew Fair. Another time Pepys went there with Lord Brouncker, Sir William Penn, and Sir John Minnes (comptrollers of the Navy, of which he was secretary). Writers were to be seen at the fair in new characters, from Fielding, who appeared as a showman, to Elkanah Settle, the City laureate, who, having only what Ben Jonson called a chandlery-shop pension, and having long been reduced to the writing of drolls, appeared at last in a green leather case as a hissing serpent! In 1725, and several successive years, Fielding set up a theatrical booth in George Yard, where he produced "The Beggar's Opera," with a company

drawn from the Haymarket, "The Beggar's Wedding," and his adaptation of "Le Médecin malgré lui," of Molière. In 1740, with the flare of torches and an escort of the Yeomen of the Guard, Frederick, Prince of Wales, visited the temporary theatre, "a tall, fair and handsome young man in a ruby-coloured frock coat very richly guarded with gold lace, and having his long flowing hair curiously curled over his forehead and at the sides, and finished with a courtly queue behind." Colley Cibber, as well as Fielding, produced an adaptation of Molière, "L'Avare" being the play in his case, which, with "Tamerlane the Great," was acted in a booth near Hosier Lane. Garrick, who took his bride to the fair in 1743, must have been amused at the money-taker at one of the smaller theatrical booths rejecting his payment for admission with the remark, "We never take money of one another." Bartholomew Fair had a long and eventful life, despite the tract written against it for Richard Harper at the Bible and Harp, Smithfield, and much more to the same effect. It was visited in 1778 by the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester, who entered at Giltspur Street and rode through Cow Lane into Holborn; it was visited by Walpole, of whose progress we have no such detailed

record. Napoleon's carriage, which, as the chariot of the tyrant, is thought a fitting entrance to the Chamber of Horrors at Madame Tussaud's, was once to have been seen at Smithfield. The fair extended into two parishes besides those of SS. Bartholomew the Great and the Less, and they who frequented it as the years grew into hundreds saw two old churches replaced by newer ones; saw, in the fifteenth century, the building of the beautiful porch of St. Sepulchre's, Holborn; saw in Christ Church, Newgate Street, the burial of Baxter and the first preachers of the Spital Sermons. The Fair lives to-day in the name of the narrow lane which led to it from the east and is still called Cloth Fair, and that of the corner where the great fire ended. Whether the Court of Pie-Powder, held there to determine disputes between pedlars and their customers, owes its name to *pied-pulderaux*, old French for pedlar, or to *pieds poudres*, because the litigants had their causes tried with the dust of the fair on their feet, is uncertain. In the time of Charles I. sellers of roast pig took advantage of the name, and Pie Corner became the "Pasty-nook." It was in this reign that Bartholomew Fair is described as one of those "unto which there is usually extraordinary resort out of all parts of the kingdom," the other two being Stourbridge Fair, near Cambridge, and "Our Lady Fair in the borough of Southwark."

Southwark Fair was instituted in 1462, by a charter granted to the City of London by Edward IV., to hold "yearly one fair together with a Court of Pie-Powders." It was apparently re-established on April 20th, 1550, costing the good citizens of London nearly £650, which was paid to Edward VI. by the Mayor and Corporation. The fair was held on St. Margaret's Hill, near the Town Hall, and in Hogarth's time extended as far as Southwark Mint, to which Cadman, the celebrated ropedancer, is seen flying by a rope from the tower of St. George's Church, in the picture of Southwark Fair, the rider on the left being Figg, the prize-fighter. Cadman lost his life in 1740 by an attempt to descend from a church

steeple at Shrewsbury. The fair was opened with great ceremony. On the 8th of September—the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin—the Lord Mayor, vested in his collar of S.S. (a symbol possibly connected with the Order of the Holy Ghost), and the sheriffs, with no cloaks to hide the glory of their scarlet gowns, preceded by the sword-bearer, wearing an embroidered cap and carrying the "Pearl Sword," rode, after two o'clock dinner, to the Church of St. Magnus, London Bridge. At first it would be the old church, of which, for three years, Miles Coverdale was rector; afterwards the procession would pass on to the bridge through the passageway under the steeple, arranged by Wren. Here it was met by the aldermen, and, after evensong, all rode to Southwark Fair, and through it as far as St. George's, Newington Bridge, or to the stones pointing out the City liberties at St. Thomas of Waterings, and then returning, banqueted at the Bridge House, the bridge-masters giving the supper. Evelyn describes St. Margaret's Fair at Southwark (so-called from the hill on which it was held), and how, in 1660, all the Court went to see an Italian girl dancing on the high rope; and in 1692 he mentions that Southwark Fair was suppressed by the Queen because a "dreadful earthquake" in Jamaica the preceding summer was ludicrously represented there in a puppet-play. The fair was finally abolished in 1763 by the Court of Common Council, on a report of the City Lands Committee. It seems to us possible that the last twenty years of its life it was kept on Tower Hill, lasting twenty-one days from the feast of St. James, and that what was known as Tower Hill Fair, and helped the funds of St. Katherine's Hospital, was really Southwark Fair in its latter days.

No flying figure of Pleasure in an allegorical picture is at once more attractive and more illusive than Westminster Fair. Regularly established in 1257, under a charter granted by Henry III. to the Abbot and canons of St. Peter's Church, it is now called St. James's Fair, then St. Peter's, and again St. Magdalen's, according to the

time at which it was held. As early as 1248 we read that "the King caused a fair to be kept at Westminster, at St. Edward's tide, to endure for fifteen days, and to the end that the same should be the more haunted with all manner of people, he commanded, by proclamation, that all other fairs, as Ely and such-like, holden at that season, should not be kept. . . . The Bishop of Ely complained sore of the wrong done to him by suspending his fair." Four years later the wrong was repeated, this time for the purpose that the King might be revenged against the Bishop, who, with some of his brethren, had refused to yield to the Pope's demand that the tenths due to the Church should be received by the King for three years, towards the expenses of a journey which he meant to make into the Holy Land. The King, having honoured Ely with his presence when the cathedral was dedicated in September, expected the Bishop to refuse him nothing, and, finding himself mistaken, wreaked his

vengeance by suspending Ely Fair. (Probably the Bishop levied tolls upon all who sold their wares in Ely at that time, as the Abbot of Westminster was allowed to do, in the fourteenth century, upon all traders at his fair, even those within the precincts of the palace). In the diary of Machyn, citizen and merchant tailor of London, in the middle of the sixteenth century, we hear how those who attended Westminster Fair went to mass in Henry VII.'s Chapel, and of how there was a procession in which "my Lord Abbott whent with ys myter and ys crosse and a grett number of copes of cloth of gold, and the wergers and mony worshefull gentyllmen and women at Westmynster." Movable in its site as in its season, the fair was held at one tim: in Rochester Row, on the space between Emery Hill's almshouses and the Grey Coat School; at another, on the ground now occupied by the Church of St. Stephen the Martyr; at a third, it extended from



HOGARTH'S SOUTHWARK FAIR

the angle of Peter Street and Horseferry Road to the five cottages which then stood alone in an open field, till lately forming a nook on the east side of Vauxhall Bridge Road, and when the fair was prohibited in 1822, in the scholars' playground, Vincent Square.

It was Edward I. who, in the eighteenth year of his reign, privileged the hospital of St. James to keep a yearly fair in Brookfield, which, from the time of James II., was called May Fair. Pepys speaks of it as St. James's Fair, so that either the season for keeping it was changed soon after, or the name was altered from that of one of the May Day saints to that of the month itself. It was held on the site of Curzon Street, Hertford Street, and Chesterfield House and Gardens, until, in 1764, it was abolished, mainly through the influence of the Earl of Coventry, to whose house, built on the site of a large inn, called the "Greyhound," at the corner of Piccadilly and Engine Street, it must have been very disturbing.

Every Easter and Whitsuntide, till 1859, the vessels in the Pool hoisted their flags, and from Swan Steps to the pier at Greenwich the river was crowded with wherries full of holiday-makers bound for Greenwich Fair. The fair was first held in the road now occupied by St. Mary's Church and the Hospital burial ground, but, later, in Bridge Street, from the church of St. Alphege to the bridge over the Ravensbourne at Deptford Creek, and it always spread into Greenwich Park. It was described by Cruickshank in his little eighteen-penny book, "A Trip to Greenwich Fair," with seven wood engravings, published in 1834.

Down to 1770 it was the custom, on St. Luke's Day, for a procession, formed of a king, a queen, a miller, and a counsellor, with others, to leave some of the old Bishopsgate inns, followed by a great crowd, all of whom

In comely sorts their foreheads did adorn
With goodly coronets of hardy horn,

and who marched to Charlton, paraded three times round the church, and attended a sermon for which the priest was paid one pound. The occasion

was Horn Fair, granted by Henry III. and opened by the lord of the manor reading a proclamation from a parchment scroll. It was originally held on the green in front of the Manor House, and afterwards in a field close by the village, and was named from the horns of the ox, symbol of the saint on whose day it was kept.

"Niagara in London" was not seen for the first time a few years since; the falls had been represented long ago at Camberwell Fair. Held in the parish churchyard till forced by the Statute of Winchester, in the thirteenth year of Edward I., to seek new quarters, this fair moved first to the High Street, opposite the "Cock," and then to Camberwell Green, now Camberwell Park, between Church Street and Camberwell Road. From the 9th of August to the 1st of September, the Feast of St. Giles, its patron saint, it was held year by year till 1855. A great attraction of the fair at one time were the go-carts, or modern sedans, the drivers whereof, according to a high-flown handbill of 1841, "lounge in aristocratic dignity in the vicinage of the 'Elephant and Castle.'"

Blackheath Fair was procured by the Earl of Dartmouth, lord of the manor, and first held on May Day, 1683. It was put down by his descendant in 1772, except as a "hog and pleasure fair," in which form it lasted till suppressed by order of the Government a hundred years later. Held twice a year from the 12th to the 14th of May, and from the 11th to the 13th of October, it was "pretended for the sale of cattle," says Evelyn, "but I think in truth to enrich the new tavern at the bowling-green, erected by Snape, his Majesty's farrier, a man full of projects."

Three times a year thousands of people in their Sunday best would fill the carts and waggons stationed near Shoreditch Church, where several streets lead into the Edmonton Road, and drive to Edmonton Fair. Two of these fairs, termed Beggar's Bush Fairs, arose from a grant made by James I. when he laid out a part of Enfield Chase as Theobald's Park. The third was called Edmonton Statute Fair, and held for the hiring of servants.

It was to the pleasures of the hunt that Peckham owed its fair. Whether it was John or Charles II., at the instance of Nell Gwynne, is not certain; in either case it was a King flushed with the success of sport who granted a fair of three days' continuance, to be held from the 21st to the 23rd of August every year. It lasted till 1827.

The patent for keeping Mile End or Stepney Fair was certainly granted in 1664 by Charles II. at the suggestion of the Earl of Cleveland, then lord of the manor for Stepney, and held at

till abolished in 1852. A weekly fair, however, is more like a market, and a daily one (such as Rag Fair, kept every afternoon near Rosemary Lane, where criers of old satin, taffety, and velvet had recourse to sell their goods), is hardly worthy the name. The Frost Fairs, held on the frozen Thames, and Hyde Park Fair, which celebrated the Queen's coronation, have left no trace behind them, and were never part of the life of London.

Of the real fairs there are few traces left now. No puppets are beheaded



GREENWICH PARK, WITH THE ROYAL OBSERVATORY, ON EASTER MONDAY

Michaelmas. Bow Fair existed from time immemorial to 1822, when it was suppressed because it had no charter. Tottenham Court Fair, held behind the "King's Head," in the Hampstead Road, was first heard much about in 1733, and was the subject of at least one old print, in the foreground of which a smock race is being run. Clapham Fair was held on Good Friday, Easter, and Whit Mondays, and "Derby Days," till 1873; Parson's Green Fair, on the 17th of August; and Battersea Fair, every week,

in allusion to the death of famous prisoners, like those executed at May Fair in honour of Lord Lovel. No Tom Fool joins Maid Marian and her merry men in the morris-dance with fox-brush and jingling bells. But the "strong man" in the modern music-hall is not unsuggestive of the one in Pepys' well-known description of Southwark Fair; our pantomime is a development of which we find the rudiments in the comic scenes at fairs between Harlequin, Scaramouch, and Columbine; the

present circus clown is the Pierrot of those same scenes; and the lesson of triumphant lawlessness, drunk in so eagerly by the audience of Punch and Judy, came over to the fairs from Italy with Punchinello. With Punchinello and such as he came those scenes of noise and disorder of which even Wordsworth, though he drew his lesson from them, could hardly lament the loss. In the "Prelude" he calls the blank confusion of Bartholomew Fair a "true epitome

Of what the mighty city is herself
To thousands upon thousands of her sons,

and adds, with that characteristic touch which never rested upon the surface of things,

But though the picture weary out the eye,
By nature an unmanageable sight,
It is not wholly so to him who looks
In steadiness, who hath among least things
An under-sense of greatest; sees the parts
As parts, but with a feeling of the whole.

The spirit of Nature was upon me there;
The soul of Beauty and enduring life
Vouchsafed her inspiration, and diffused,
Through meagre lines and colours, and the
press

Of self-destroying, transitory things,
Composure, and ennobling Harmony.



The St. Bernard Monastery

WRITTEN BY COLONEL E. MITCHELL (LATE R.E.)

ILLUSTRATED BY PHOTOGRAPHS KINDLY GIVEN BY THE REV. PRIOR



SAD but graphic story was recently circulated by many of our contemporaries, to the effect that an avalanche had partly overwhelmed this monastery, and that the good monks had been entombed, and had, like rabbits, to burrow out of the building, and that its sphere of usefulness had been temporarily stopped. The tale remains undenied, though incorrect. We are glad to be able to give unequivocal contradiction to it, as our contributor, Colonel E. Mitchell, late R.E. (who with Mrs. Mitchell visited the monastery a while ago), doubting, from his knowledge of the locality, the possibility of such an occurrence, has communicated with the Father Prior, who has declared that "the accident of the journals" has done no harm, and has placed at our disposal photographs of the world-renowned hospice uninjured. The avalanche expended its violence on the plateau on which the building of the venerable monastic order stands.

About 1,000 years ago the simple faith of St. Bernard de Menthon and a few followers led to the erection of a monastery, succeeded by a more substantial one, which served as a model for what is now popularly known as the Great St. Bernard Monastery. This one dates from 1680. It is situated on a plateau at the lofty elevation of over 10,000 feet above the sea, on the border of a small lake, through the centre of which runs the boundary between Italy and Switzerland. It is the most lofty inhabited point in Europe, a wonderful

record to enterprise, endurance, and religious fervour; and, year by year, month by month, daily, the vigil of praise and prayer rises in the same manner as 1,000 years ago, though in the desolate region where no note of birds breaks the solitude, and vegetable life is absent, and the unique scenery, Mount Blanc, Mount Vilan, Mount Rosa, and other lofty giants that are usually visible, remain in their stern, unique grandeur. Untiring and constant hospitality to "all sorts and conditions of men" passing to and from Italy and Switzerland is the special vocation of this Order, which, with its brother on the Simplon, is governed by the canons of St. Augustine. The head of the Order is the Prevôt, who resides in the monastery at Martigny. A large number of Americans annually visit the monastery.

The Order is the opposite of a silent one, as by the rules of this one, and its "double" on the Simplon, above indicated, "Labour for those in the world, but not to be of the world," seems their motto. Every evening the monks, whose number rarely exceeds twenty-five, and those who may be visiting the hospice also, meet in their beautiful chapel, at the impressive service held at 8 p.m., of the Benediction of the Holy Sacrament. This Order, which still clings to the name of its founder, St. Bernard de Menthon, fasts on Saturdays in place of Friday. "The trivial round, the common task" is under the administration of the resident Prior, who is assisted by the "Infirmier" in looking after the sick and infirm, and by the

Clavandier, and the "Elemosinaire" in the case of tourists and wayfarers. Another service is held at noon daily.

The "Père Maître" looks after the education and instruction of the novices, also young men of good physique, health, position, and good family, who undergo a three years' novitiate before admission into the Order, sorely tried by the severe Alpine climate; and they are not admitted if they do not possess health and strength.

We arrived at the hospice after a long carriage journey from Martigny, and

comfortable bed, and the lay brother who waited upon us at table when not actually serving us, read to himself from a book of devotion. The cells, alike clean and airy, are usually warmed by stoves, an arrangement the rigour of the climate renders absolutely necessary for the due preservation of human life. A bed, chairs, washstand, lamp, and crucifix, are the usual furniture and accessories, and some of the brethren keep canaries, which thrive very well. The cold, however, is so intense that frequently in the months of January,



HOSPICE, OR MONASTERY OF GREAT ST. BERNARD

had to walk a distance of six miles from the Valley of the Dead, up the steep ascent to the hospice in its narrow Alpine gorge. But about two or three years ago the last six miles of carriage road has been completed, so that the danger to travellers to and from the monastery from the sudden snow storms and fogs which are prevalent, is now minimised. The Reverend Prior and brethren gave us a thorough and hearty welcome when we arrived with our guide at about 7 p.m. We were given an excellent dinner, very good wine, and

February, and March, the beautiful chapel is necessarily closed, and divine service conducted in one of the rooms. I cannot but think arrangements might be made by means of modern stoves to keep the chapel warm all the year round. The cows belonging to the monastery live in the stables underneath, and at no great distance is the Morgue, where the bodies of those who have perished in the mountains are usually deposited. Should a monk die at the hospice, a rare occurrence, his body is buried with much solemn ceremony

in a cavern under the church. On the road to the hospice there is the iron cross to the memory of François Cart, that good and brave monk, who was killed by an avalanche in November, 1845, when endeavouring with the aid of some "maronniers" (labourers) to cut a track through the snow for some travellers. November, 1874, was again fatal to the poor monks. They left the monastery to accompany some of their visitors on their journey, the weather being unfavourable. The party reached the Canton de Pras in the valley in safety. The five monks and the "maronniers" then set out on their return journey with a party of twenty travellers on their way to the monastery. When about three-quarters of a mile from their destination, a "local avalanche" covered thirteen; but those who had escaped rescued five alive. Alas! the poor "maronnier" and two of the monastic brothers, Canlaid and Classy, were among the killed.

The catastrophe of the spring of 1885 was not a fatal one. The clavandier

and the maronniers engaged in work close to the hospice, were suddenly enveloped by a mass of snow rushing from one of the surrounding peaks. The monks, hearing their cries, rushed from the monastery with snow shovels and dug them out alive.

The thrilling experiences of the expedition to this monastery in 1128, under Abbot Rudolph, are so interesting that I have extracted them from the "Waters of Lethe." "The party having arrived at Etrouble at the foot of the mountain, succeeded at great personal risk in reaching St. Rami, when they were almost swept away by an avalanche. Then, the small village was overcrowded by the throng of pilgrims. From the lofty and rugged heights above often fell detached masses of snow carrying away everything they encountered, so that when some parties of the guides had found their places, and others were still waiting near the houses, these masses swept the latter away, and suffocated some while crushing and crippling others who were in the building. They had



GROUP OF MONKS FROM THE MONASTERY OF THE GREAT ST. BERNARD



LAKE NEAR MONASTERY OF GREAT ST. BERNARD

to spend several days in this ill-omened village. Then the marones (the professional guides) of the mountain came of their own accord to the pilgrims, and they offered for a large reward that they should try and open up the road so that the pilgrims should follow them on foot, then the horses after them, so that the path being well trodden down a good road might be made for the horses' masters, who being more tender might come after the others. Hence the marones wrapped their heads round with felt by reason of the extreme cold, put rough mittens on their hands, pulled on their high boots, the soles of which are armed with iron spikes on account of the slipperiness of the ice, took in their hands long poles to sound for the path very deep under the snow, and boldly started for the usual road. It was very early in the morning and the pilgrims in the greatest fear and trembling prepared themselves for celebrating "The Divine Mysteries," and, by communicating, to face imminent death. While their devotions were taking place with the utmost fervency in church a most sorrowful lament sounded through the village, for as the marones were advancing out of the village in each others' steps an enormous mass of snow like a mountain, slipped from the rocks, overwhelming ten of them, and carrying them

"to the depths of hell." This terrible catastrophe so thoroughly frightened the Abbot and the pilgrims that they made the best of their way back to the Italian plains.

The exquisite church, mainly of Byzantine architecture, is well attended when weather permits by the peasants near. Among other treasures it has a portrait of the founder of the Order and his dog. It is a part of the rules of the Order that small parties attended by the world-renowned dogs go daily between All Saints' day and the middle of May, as far as the Italian and Swiss refuges which lie in the route. The journeys often take several hours when the northern blasts rise and snow and sleet rage. Travellers are found at times by the clever dogs, who invariably carry food and drink in a roll tied round their powerful necks, so that the "lost" are at once resuscitated, and carried off to the monastery to be put into condition to renew their journey. The average age of the poor dogs rarely exceeds seven years, though these sagacious creatures are fed twice a day, and the mothers and the puppies live at the monastery farm at Martigny. The expenses of the monastery are necessarily high, because everything in the shape of food, fodder, etc., etc., has to be brought under difficult conditions from long distances, and

the inclement weather and heavy falls of snow usually limit the period annually from July 20th to October 12th, but its great good is so well known and recognised, that there is no difficulty about the money, especially as a useful Meteorological Recording Station has for many years been carried on there, and the hospice is also connected by "wire" and telephone with the world below.

A residence of from ten to fifteen years usually undermines the hardy constitution of the good monks, though, they are not admitted into the Order unless of strong physique, and after a three years' novitiate; but it is pleasant to know that they are well cared for at Martigny when thus broken down, and if health permits they are appointed as curés in Roman Catholic churches in the valleys. There they—scholars, men of refinement and position, who have devoted their lives to prayer, good works and self-denial, respected and loved by high and low—pass their few remaining years of life in this world. The good they do "Eternity" will tell.

As tourists can now use the road up to the door of the monastery, and enjoy in comparative ease the unique scenery characteristic of the Range and district, they may find it convenient, before starting, to "wire" or telephone to the monastery to ascertain whether there be accommodation, as the pressure on its hospitality is great. The ancient name of the mountain on which this monastery stands was Jovis Pennini, and the ruins of the ancient Temple of that name are within half a mile: among them have been discovered, from time to time, many medals, Celtic and Roman coins, which are preserved in a case in the library. This pass is that over which Hannibal made his celebrated passage of the Alps, and the Romans also, in the "ancient times," used this route. Napoleon I. led his army by the doors of the monastery, and the monks tendered hospitality before the Emperor passed down to the plains of Italy, with his artillery and other troops, and annihilated the Italian power by the victory at Marengo.





WRITTEN BY DAISY PENDER-CUDLIP. ILLUSTRATED BY
J. E. GILLINGWATER

"**W**ILL be an actor!"
The speaker, a slight boyish figure apparently about sixteen years of age, had just come out of Charing Cross station, having run away from home, in order to "seek his fortune on the stage," as he expressed it to himself.

The crowd and life in the busy Strand seemed to invigorate him; his eyes were bright and his figure involuntarily straightened as he walked up the crowded thoroughfare mingling with the denizens of Bonny Bohemia. "Yes," he repeated, "I will be an actor!"

"Then you'd better learn to lie like the devil, and have the cheek of ten, if you want to be an actor," spoke a voice at his elbow, owned by a shabby member of the profession.

"I—I—beg your pardon," stammered the boy; "did I speak aloud?"

"Yes, you uttered a very decided intention; but before you commit yourself, look at me. I am one of the many who have gone under, because, fool that I was, I thought art could keep me in

bread and butter. Unless you are prepared to stick at nothing, don't join our overcrowded ranks—that's my advice." And the shabby man looked at the boy not unkindly.

"Thanks, awfully," answered the boy, laughing; "I've heard all that before, but as I've run away from home with the determination to be an actor, an actor I mean to be, even if I have to lie like the devil himself to get there—since you say that is the only road."

"Oh, I see you are past praying for; but come and have a drink!" said the shabby man.

"The drinking man is the failure; I'll avoid drink and stick to lying," thought the boy.

"Thanks, awfully, but I never accept an invitation I am unable to repay," he answered, with a winning smile that quite took the sharpness off his refusal.

"You're an independent youngster, and I hope you'll get on. Stay—by the way, what's your name?"

An instant's pause.

"Dick Rayne," came the answer.

"Lie number one," said the shabby man; "you'll do. Ta-ta, and good luck



" 'I WILL BE AN ACTOR' "

to you"; and with that he wheeled round and disappeared inside the swing doors of a public-house.

"Now for it," said the boy to himself. "From this moment I am Dick Rayne, and some day I'll make it a name worth having. Let's see how much I am worth," and he drew out of his pockets two shillings, a sixpenny-piece and two coppers.

"All I have in the world," he said, "so it must be carefully invested." With

the two coppers he bought the current number of *The Stage*; then he went to "Lockhart's," where he invested his sixpence in a wonderfully substantial meal for the money and took the opportunity of studying *The Stage* from cover to cover. Among the portraits that week there happened to be one of a leading juvenile, well known in the provinces, and so remarkably like the boy that he was struck by it himself: they might well have been brothers.

Feeling in his coat pocket, he produced a pocket-book, out of which he took a couple of rather grimy-looking blank calling cards. Carefully cleaning one of them with some bread crumbs, he scrawled the name of the leading juvenile on it in pencil, and replaced it in his pocket-book. He paid his sixpence, took up his *Stage*, and went out.

"Now for the Imperial Theatre," he thought, but not without a few misgivings.

At the Imperial was being produced a new spectacular drama; the rehearsals had been in hand for a week when the leading juvenile was taken dangerously ill, and speculation was rife as to who would fill his place. All this Dick Rayne learnt from *The Stage*; then he saw the portrait of the provincial favourite, and from these ingredients arose his great idea.

Arrived at the theatre, he presented his (?) card and asked to see the Manager. Would he go round to the stage door; Mr. Moore was there superintending rehearsals in the absence of the Manager, and would, doubtless, do as well.

So he went round, and with much assurance requested the hall-keeper to take his card to Mr. Moore. The old man looked curiously at him for an instant, and then departed inside the mystic swing door that separates the outer world from the world "behind." In a few moments he came back, and with a curious smile told Dick he would find the Guv'nor on the stage.

He went; and there not only did he see the Guv'nor, but with him the very man he was impersonating.

"I believe you wished to see me?" said the Manager smiling; but the smile was a dangerous one.

"I did, sir; but not now. You see, I didn't expect to meet—well, hang it all!—the original," jerking his head at the provincial favourite, who bowed with a satirical politeness, trying to hide an amused twinkle in his eye. Dick detected it, however, and, seizing his moment, said, rather incoherently it must be confessed, and in jerky sentences:

"I want to be an actor, and this

seemed a chance. I knew I should never get as much as the sight of you," addressing Mr. Moore, the Sub-manager, "without an introduction, so I thought, as I was so like Mr. Carlisle, I would try and get it that way, you see. I'm stone-broke, sir, and was going to ask you to give me the leading part."

"Give you the leading part," gasped the utterly-taken-aback manager, "well I'm d——d. You young scoundrel, you ought to be given in charge for impersonating this gentleman, for one thing, and with attempting to obtain money under false pretences, for another."

For a moment, the boy's lips quivered. He was, after all, only a boy; and at that moment he felt a very friendless and lonely boy. True, he had cast himself adrift from home, but that didn't make him feel any the happier just then—rather the reverse.

Moreover, he had only two shillings left in the world, and that won't go far with a hungry boy. He had made a desperate venture, entered into partly out of desperation and partly in the spirit of "a lark." Now his venture had failed, he saw it in the new light just presented to him, and his lip quivered. The young actor, noticing this, intervened on his behalf, with the result that he was allowed to go without the assistance of a policeman.

It was a very crestfallen Dick that emerged from the stage door. "Lie number one is a failure," he said, "so here goes for the next move."

DEAR SIR,—Seeing by to-day's *Era* that you have a small part to offer, I venture to apply, as I am most anxious to obtain a London engagement. I have had considerable provincial experience in such parts as . . . here followed a list of more or less well-known characters. Should you require references, I shall be pleased to supply you with a list of my most recent managers, and if you entertain my application I shall be pleased to call on you any day you like to appoint.—Believe me, Sir, yours faithfully,

RICHARD RAYNE.

Such was the letter received by the Manager of the Imperial Theatre a few days after the incidents just related.

He tossed it across to his partner.

"Sounds all right," he said. Mr. Moore read it carefully.

"Plenty of experience, certainly. I don't know the fellow's name, but, of course, there are such numbers in the provinces, one can't be expected to know them all. Yes, I should say he would do; the part's only a small one, and he can't do much harm with it. Shall I offer him terms?"

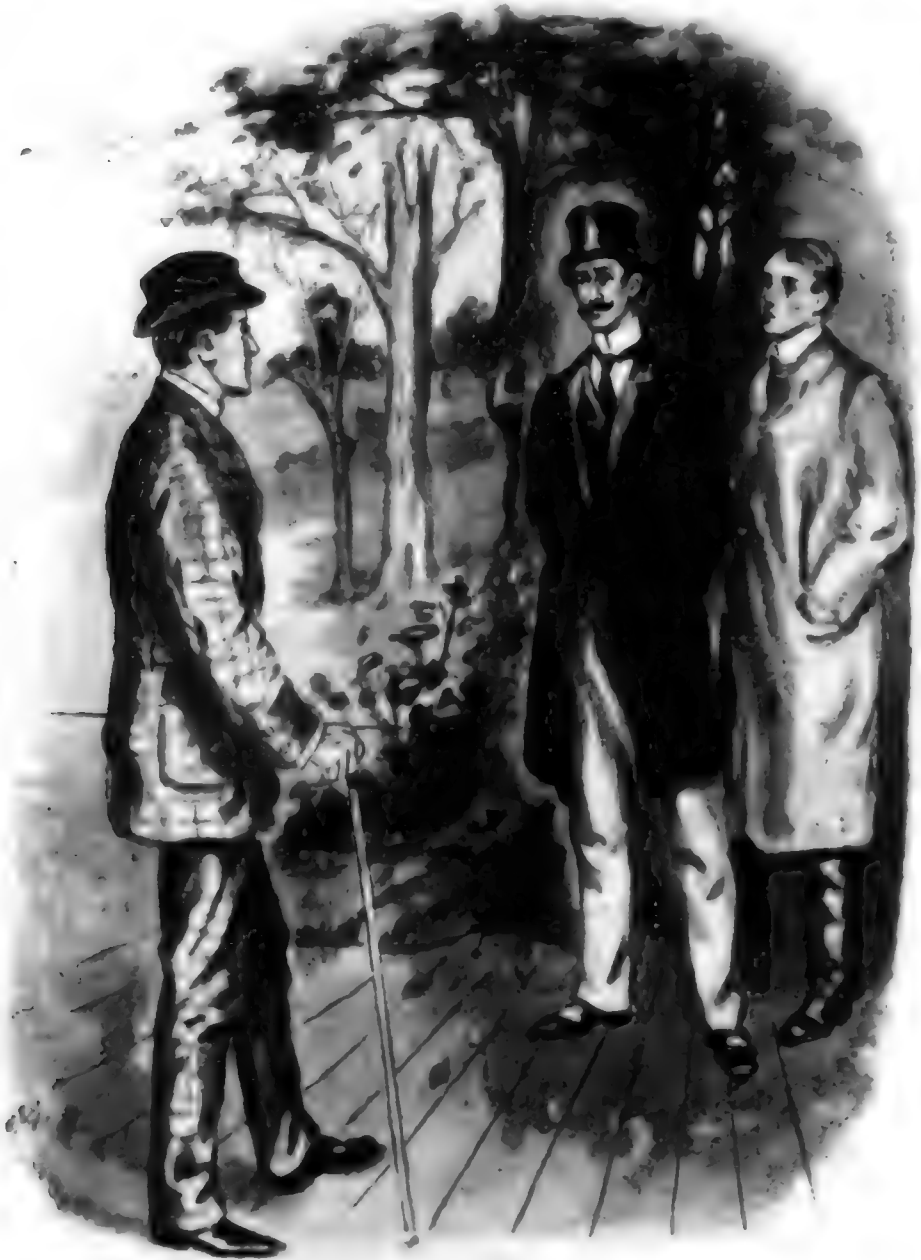
"We may as well," answered the chief. "As you say, he can't do much harm with the part, and he'll be cheap."

Accordingly a type-written letter was

received by Mr. Richard Rayne, offering him a small part in the forthcoming production, with the understudy for lead, at a comparatively small salary.

Richard Rayne closed with the offer naturally, and by return received the part, which he sat up all night to study, arriving the next morning at rehearsal letter and position perfect.

The two Managers who leased the theatre and were producing the drama did not appear at first, greatly to Dick's



"'I WANT TO BE AN ACTOR'"

relief; but, after his one scene, the Stage-manager said to him, "New at this game, eh?"

"Oh dear no! plenty of experience, I assure you," with a great attempt at swagger. The Stage-manager winked. "All right, old chap, keep it up by all means; but take my tip, *read your part at a first rehearsal*, it's more professional. But I won't give you away, as you're all right in the part."

At this juncture the two Managers arrived. The chief came up and spoke to Dick, asked a few questions as to his ability of the Stage-manager, and passed on. Poor Dick's heart was in his mouth; he dreaded being recognised by Mr. Moore, and kept far back in the shadow of the scene dock. But he knew it was all up when the Stage-manager called his scene; however, putting a bold face on it, he came forward, hoping still to escape detection.

"Hulloa, you young rascal, what do you mean by this?" and Mr. Moore had him gripped by the collar. Dick knew the game was up, and said nothing. The company, seeing something was the matter, crowded round eagerly, and the chief was sent for.

"This young scoundrel," said Mr. Moore, shaking him so violently that he felt his collar would choke him, is the same impostor who tried to pass himself off as Douglas Carlisle, the boy I told you about, and now he writes a pack of lies and gets here again under false pretences—what's to be done with him?"

The chief, a big, surly-looking man, looked at the boy steadily.

"I shall know you again, my lad, so don't you try any of your tricks on me. In fact, the best way will be to call a policeman and give him in charge at once."

"Then it's all up," said the boy, relaxing the tension which hitherto had kept him defiant. "Anyhow, I shall get some food in prison, and I'm starving!"

"Poor boy," said a sympathetic woman's voice. "Mr. Carter, will you let him off this once, and I'm sure he won't do it again—will you?" she said eagerly, turning to Dick.

"*This once!*" angrily replied the

Manager, "it's the second time he's played this trick on us."

"Please do!" came a chorus of feminine voices, and the comedy old woman put her hand on the Manager's arm, and in almost a whisper said, "You had a son once—for *his* sake!"

A spasm of pain came over the Manager's face, followed by a softer look. "Very well, ladies, I will let him off. Mrs. Wilton has appealed to me in a way I can't resist. Now, young man, be off, and never let me see you here again."

Slowly Dick turned to go, his face flushed with the shame of his position. But his slowness irritated Mr. Moore, who had no sentimental feelings; so, again taking him by the collar, he marched him off the stage down the passage to the stage door, where Dick's exit was hurried by Mr. Moore's boot.

Dick picked himself up ruefully, then the humour of the situation struck him, and he laughed.

"Lie number two is a failure, so I think I'll have a shot at the truth and see how that works."

Good resolutions are easy to make, and it is so easy to be good, when you have everything you want, and there is no temptation to be anything else; but poor Dick was at that moment absolutely destitute and very hungry, and to a really hungry man the sense of right and wrong gets blurred. "But," he said to himself, "I will be an actor yet!"

He wandered aimlessly about for hours; then, as it was getting dusk, he sought out that refuge of the destitute—a pawn-shop. He hadn't much to part with; an old gold pencil-case, a set of gold links, and his watch—the chain had already gone. He didn't get much, but a few shillings kept him from absolute starvation, and gave him a shelter for the night. The next morning he went the round of the agents, and found it heartbreaking work; the same thing everywhere—rooms crowded with weary-looking men and women patiently waiting on the off-chance of getting a "shop." For himself the same questions, and the same result, "What experience have you had?"

"Not any at present, but I am anxious to go on the stage and——"

"Thank you, that will do; I've nothing to offer amateurs, unless you like to pay a premium, say, of £50"—etc., etc.

At last, driven to desperation, he admitted he "was absolutely penniless, and would be glad of anything. Would be a super even, if he got the chance."

"Now you're talking sense, my lad," said this particular agent, who, unlike the others he had met that day, took the trouble to really listen to what he had to say; "you're young, and can afford to begin at the very beginning, and, if you really want to be an actor, it will be excellent training. And bear this in mind," he added kindly, "whatever you have to do, however small, remember it is worth doing well. Study details; watch, and let nothing escape you. By this you will learn, and your managers will see that you are instinctively an artist a bit above the other supers; do you see? Then, you may get your chance. Go down to the Imperial, and ask to see the super-master; say I sent you, and it'll be all right. And above all," he added kindly, "remember my advice—what's worth doing at all is worth doing well."

"Is there no other theatre besides the Imperial in want of supers?"

For Dick's heart sank with a sense of failure when he heard the name.

"No, it's the only house that's any good to you; take my advice and go there."

"Very well, sir, and thank you. Good morning!" and he left the office.

"Anyhow, I've a good mind to chance it," he thought; "there's luck in odd numbers—besides, I'm not likely to run across the Managers, and I'll steer clear of the principals. I shan't be noticed among the crowd, and when once rehearsals are over, I shall be all right, make-up will disguise me."

It was just as he surmised; he saw the Super-master, told him he was sent by the agent, and was engaged at the splendid salary of one shilling a night for the run of the piece, and it only wanted two days to the production. The supers were rehearsed, of course, apart from the principals, until the dress rehearsal, when, disguised first as an old fisherman, with wig and beard, and

afterwards as one of the Indians, he could defy detection.

The supers were a gaunt, hungry set of men, none of them old stagers, but picked up anywhere, and at the dress rehearsal threatened to spoil the whole dramatic effect by their stupidity. The Manager was frantically shouting directions and tearing his hair.

"Is there no one among the lot of you who understands his business?" he shouted at them.

No answer from the sullen crowd.

"Is there anyone among you who has served in the army?"

Dick stepped forward, and, saluting, said, "I've never served, sir, but my father was a soldier, and I know the orders, sir."

"Then give them, you blockhead, and see that the men know their meaning. Super-master, make that fellow—here, what's your number?"

"Twenty-seven, sir."

"See that Twenty-seven is made captain over that batch, and," turning to Dick, "if you don't lick them into something like order, you'll get your notice."

"Very good, sir," and, saluting smartly, he stepped back into the ranks.

This episode over, the rehearsal proceeded.

"Here's my chance," thought the boy eagerly, "and be hanged if I don't use it."

He had spoken truth when he said his father was a soldier, and it was Major Grimstone's grief that his son did not wish to join the service that embittered him against the "play-acting tomfoolery." But when at school Dick belonged to the cadet corps, and there it was he learned the smattering of soldiering that was now to serve him in such good stead.

The men he had to deal with were a rough lot, who at first resented one of their number being set above them; but for all that there was something about the boy, his rigid determination in dealing with them, that won at least their respect, and at once they detected "the gentleman." *That* would not have pleased them, though, for what right has a gentleman to be doing the poor man's legitimate work and taking the bread out of his mouth? Then the

knowledge that Dick was as destitute as the poorest among them roused their sense of justice, and resentment was at an end. Poor, shabby, and often hungry, there was something about him which seemed to lift him above his surroundings—the look of a steady purpose in his eyes. He had fixed his ambition on a goal, and he meant to reach it. The road was a rough one, but he walked over the ruts and sharp stones, as it were, and never looked at them. Moreover, the position of authority given to him, small though it was, in a great measure helped him, for it upheld his self-respect.

The men were a handful, stupid and sullen, and at times he despaired of ever licking them into shape. For a week he had them there, an hour every morning, and drilled them for all he was worth. He marched them round and round that stage, in close and in open order, at the quick and at the double; he formed them in squares, and taught them all the evolutions he knew, until the men were becoming almost as interested as himself. A curious picture, as the Manager thought, when, hearing unwonted sounds as he came out of his office, he stepped into the back of the pit and saw what it was.

There were the usual stupid set of supers, going through evolutions that would not have disgraced—well, at any rate, a rather recently-formed corps. They were by no means perfect, but, compared with what they had been, it was marvellous.

But who was the boy at the head of it all? The Manager could not see his face, as he was standing with his back to the empty house, facing his men.

"Mark time!" shouted the boy. "Left, right—left, right!" Then came a string of rather unparliamentary language, as he caught sight of a man marking time wrong.

"Quick—mar-r-r-ch!" Then they marched round in two companies, with orders at the right moment to "right turn, right incline," etc. Then he called a halt, and, bringing the men in one line right across the stage, he again shouted, "Quick—mar-r-r-ch!" On they came in a good line till within a couple of feet of the boy.

"Right-about—tur-r-r-n!"

And they wheeled round and were marching up stage, when a voice came out of the gloom of the empty theatre telling them to stop. The men took no notice, and continued their march. The boy called, "Right-about face!" and then turned casually to see who was the interrupter.

"Good Lord! it's the boss," he muttered. Well, he was caught this time, and he knew there would be no quarter given; but he wasn't going to show the white feather.

"Stop, I tell you!" shouted the Manager, purple in the face with rage. He was standing just behind the orchestra. The men took no notice.

"Halt!" called the boy. They came to the halt immediately.

"Stand at ease!—stand easy!"

Then, turning round, he saluted the Manager gravely, and asked if he had spoken.

"What are you doing there?" thundered the irate Manager.

"Acting, sir—acting."

"And who the devil gave you permission to do this?"

"I received my orders from you, sir."

"From me!"

"Yes, sir, from you." And, once more gravely saluting, he wheeled round and continued drilling his men.

"T-t-chun! By your right. Quick—mar-r-r-ch! Left, right—left, right!" And round went the men, the boy quietly giving his orders, and looking every inch a young soldier; but could the Manager have read his thoughts, he would have seen a fainting heart, in which there was nothing at that moment but utter despair. He knew the game was up, but, to save appearances and keep up his position before the men, the situation must be saved; so he *acted*.

"I'm an actor now, if I never am again," he thought, and smiled grimly at the trick fate had played him.

The Manager dropped back into the shadow of the pit, and watched the little comedy. That it was no comedy to the boy he guessed, and it interested him. After a lapse of about five minutes, the young drill-sergeant dispersed his men; then, as they were leaving, he called after them:

"Call, twelve to-morrow, boys, as usual," and then himself left the stage.

"Well, of all the infernal cheek I ever met!" exclaimed the Manager, aloud: but he was laughing as he spoke. "Does he think he is Stage-manager?—ordering a call, indeed!" Here the humour of

A prolonged whistle was Dick's only comment. He put the finishing touch to the last rifle, and went, as he thought, "to his doom."

He knocked at the door of the great man's room, his pulse beating painfully in his throat.



"THEN THE MANAGER WHEELED HIS CHAIR ROUND"

the thing came home so forcibly that he laughed aloud.

About ten minutes later the office-boy found Dick in the property-room, polishing and oiling the supers' rifles for that night's show.

"The Guv'nor wants you in the office," he said, and disappeared.

"Come in," said a gruff voice; and he entered. There was the Manager seated at his desk, apparently busied with some papers, for he did not look up at once.

In that awful moment Dick felt his own loneliness in the world, and all he had sacrificed; he felt as though he were a little child again in his impotence, and

two tears welled up in his eyes. If only he could escape, he would go home, and his mother, he felt sure, would forgive him. He was standing with his back to the door, one hand trying to turn the handle quietly, and when ready he was going to slip out.

"Come over here!" said the Manager, without looking up.

Dick went; escape was out of the question, so he would try and brazen it out. But something seemed to stick in his throat and choke him.

Then the Manager wheeled his chair round, and, looking hard at him, he said, in a dry, cutting voice:

"What stuff are you made of, I wonder! Twice have you been thrown out of this theatre, and here I find you again, having expressly forbidden you ever to come inside the doors. What stuff are you made of? Do you hear me? Answer me!"

"I don't know, sir."

"Don't know, indeed!—but I do."

Dick edged back as the Manager came towards him; he might even now escape, he was a quick runner, and the Manager was fat.

"Don't know, indeed!" he repeated. "You're made of the stuff that comes to the front. I suppose nothing would stop you, when you've made up what you call your mind—eh?"

Dick looked up quickly, questioningly. What had the Manager meant? The words sounded like praise, but the tones were so loud as to sound angry. What did he mean?

"Come, come, answer me. You determined to be an actor, and I suppose, if the whole profession had tried to stop you, you would have outwitted us somehow."

"Yes, sir," and Dick grinned as he remembered his own episodes with this man.

"Come here, you young scoundrel, convicted out of your own mouth," and the Manager seized a shaking and trembling Dick, with two tears slowly coursing down his cheeks, by the collar.

"What's he going to do with me now?" thought the unhappy boy; "it's all up."

Letting go his collar, the Manager lifted him by the waist and plumped him

down on the office table. Dick never felt such a child as he did at that moment.

"My boy, I'm proud of you! You *shall* be an actor, and I will help you."

The reaction was too great, and for a moment the boyish frame was shaken by smothered sobs. When there is not sufficient feeding, the nervous system gets unstrung. Dick had been living on very scanty fare lately, and this proved too much. The Manager, whose face now few would recognise, so softened and kind did he appear, stroked the lad's head in silence, till he should recover himself. Soon Dick pulled himself together, and wriggled down off the table; he didn't like being made to feel so small and childish.

"I don't know what to say, sir," he said, fumbling with his cap, "and I don't know why you should be so kind, after the way I've behaved."

"Because, my boy," answered the Manager, "I admire pluck and determination, and you've got both. They were misdirected, I own," he added, as if afraid too much unmitigated praise would be bad for the youngster just then; and he was right. "Now, I want to help you to direct your energies into the right channel." Here he paused for a moment's reflection, studying the boy's face intently the while. "You've shown you're not above small beginnings; would you be content to work your way up steadily by slow degrees, or do you want to be at the top of the tree at one bound?" This with a quizzical smile that was by no means lost on Dick.

"As I have begun, my only chance will be in working steadily up. I'm not afraid of work of any kind, sir," he added eagerly, "if it will help me to gain my end."

"Now listen to me," said the manager: "At the present moment you are a super earning a shilling a night; if you like to accept it, I can offer you the post of baggage man with our provincial company that starts on tour next week, at a salary of 25s. a week. Will you take it?"

Dick's face fell. He, the embryo actor, to be a baggage man!

"I see by your face," said the manager, "that you would rather not."

"It's not that, sir; but how can I learn to be an artist by looking after the baggage?"

"Easily, you can look about you—study the artists; and I think I may entrust you with a small line part, which to you will be better than nothing, I daresay."

"Thanks, awfully, sir, and you bet," lapsing boy-like into slang in his excitement, "you bet I'll speak those lines so well that before long you'll give me something better."

"I believe you, my boy," laughed the much-amused Manager; "now go, and good luck go with you!"

Dick hesitated, stammered out something that was meant for thanks, and went out of the office.

"The lies were no good," he said to himself, "that chap was all in the wrong. By Jingo! though, I've had a narrow squeak; the boss is a ripper, and I'll be a model baggage man to please him."

The tour started, with Dick as baggage man and utility? and, as he said he would, he spoke his few lines so well,

and took such pains over every detail of his make-up, that his performance, tiny though it was, was recognised as the work of an artist, for he acted up to the axiom that if it was worth doing at all it was worth doing well.

When the company started on the second tour, Dick was promoted to a small part at thirty-five shillings a week, and the baggage was handed over to another man.

* * * *

Two years have passed, and by steady application to his work, and a reputation for dependableness, and thoroughness in all undertaken, he has gained a name among provincial managers as a very promising young actor.

And the Manager of the Imperial thinks that a boy who could have so successfully outwitted *him* must have something in him above the common herd, and is watching his career, waiting for the moment when he shall be fit to be given his chance in London. The day will assuredly come, and on that day Dick will *not* spell "Failure."



Some Ancient Royal Ornaments

WRITTEN BY HELEN C. GORDON.

ILLUSTRATED BY E. JESSICA LEWIS.

"In ancient days, so saith an old romaunt."—*Stone*.



HE brevity of man's life, in contrast with the lengthier existence of his handiwork, is most forcibly brought before us by the quaint and curious ornaments which have outlasted generations of owners, who have treasured them either for their intrinsic worth, or for the many memories which surround them with a halo of romance. The brains, by whose thought they had their being, the hands that fashioned them, have crumbled into dust; yet the quaint old talisman or jewel remains intact far on into the centuries, valued at length, perchance, for its antiquity alone.

A relic such as this, to which is attached a curious legend born of the days of mediæval piety and superstition, was preserved for some hundreds of years in Westminster Abbey. Unhappily no mention of "England's wedding ring," as it is called by some authors, is to be found in the Abbey records after the reign of Henry VIII. Some covetous hand, about that period, must have stolen the jewel from its sacred resting-place in the shrine of its owner, King Edward the Confessor. According to the story in the "Golden Legend," "a certain fayre old man," one day, begged alms of the sainted monarch, who, having nought else at that moment to bestow, drew a ring from his finger with which the recipient gratefully went on his way.

Not long after this incident had occurred, two English pilgrims journeying to the Holy City became separated from their comrades, and by some misadventure lost their road. Fortunately before

nightfall they met an old man with snow-white hair, who asked them whence they came and who they were. On ascertaining that they were English pilgrims, bound for the Holy City, he offered to conduct them to the nearest town, where they might obtain refreshment and shelter for the night. Next day he expressed his intention of accompanying them until they were once more on the right road to Jerusalem, and could rejoin their friends. After many inquiries for the health and welfare of King Edward, the old man informed them that he was St. John the Evangelist, and charged the pilgrims with a message for the pious Saxon monarch, to be delivered when then returned to their own country. "Tell him," he said, "I grete him well by the token that he gafe to me, this ring with his own hand, which deliver to him again." Then, solemnly delivering the ring into their joint keeping, he "departed suddenly." The astonished pilgrims made all haste to return to England, and unburden themselves of the story of their adventure, adding one more to the many myths gradually growing round the personality of the Confessor.

Of still earlier date is a quaint old jewel, which in itself bears witness to the mind which created it, which must at one time have been used by Alfred the Great as a personal ornament. "The best and the greatest of all our kings," so much in advance mentally of the rude age in which he lived, endeavoured to promote a knowledge of the gentler arts amongst his warlike subjects, hitherto engrossed in resisting the predatory attacks of Danish marauders. The arti-



THE ALFRED JEWEL

ficers in gold and silver, whom he encouraged to settle in his dominions, often wrought their precious metals under his personal supervision and direction, as this jewel testifies.

"Ælfred me haet gewerken" [Alfred had me made] are the words encircling the pendant, which in the flatness of its shape resembles a locket. In its centre is a figure beaten out in the gold, probably intended to represent the King himself. The end of the ornament is formed of a Griffin—the Saxon national emblem—from the mouth of which issues a small hollow cylinder. By this it was most likely attached to a collar, and worn round the neck as a badge or symbol of the kingly office. The jewel was discovered at the close of the 17th century at Athelney, in Somersetshire, where Alfred founded a monastery. The bogs and woods of the "almost inaccessible little island," to quote William of Malmesbury, had afforded him safe shelter from his enemies, the Danes, when they overran Wessex. Doubtless the sacred edifice was built in token of his gratitude for deliverance from the hands of the northern pirates.

Another famous king, Charles the Great, of France, nearly contemporary with Alfred, possessed a talisman presented to him by the ambassadors of the mighty Caliph Haroun-al-Raschid. It was made at the instance of Fastrada, Charlemagne's wife, and was fashioned by the Magi, or Wise Men, in the train of the Oriental Embassy. To it was ascribed the magical power of endearing its wearer to the Emperor, and holding

fast his love. The ornament is of fine gold set with gems, and has in its centre two uncut sapphires, a portion of the Holy Cross and other relics. From its size and appearance it would seem to have been intended as a neck ornament, but tradition asserts that Fastrada wore it upon her finger. So potent was the charm that even when Death laid his cold hand upon her, Charlemagne refused to leave the body of his adored wife, nor would he sanction its burial. Not until his confessor, who knew the secret of the talisman, removed the jewel from her finger, did the Emperor allow the interment of the corpse. Then, curiously enough, his affections were transferred to the wily monk, who retained possession of the ring. Honour after honour was showered upon the new favourite, who was speedily invested with the highest dignities of Church and State—created Archbishop of Mainz, and Chancellor of the Empire. At length, realising that he was at the height of his ambition, either to test the real value of the charm, or somewhat tardily assailed by conscientious scruples, the prelate flung the jewel into a lake, on the shores of which



CHARLEMAGNE'S TALISMAN

the town of Ingethūm now stands. Soon indeed he must have repented his rash act, for his royal master's attention was instantly diverted from himself to the ornamental piece of water in which the ring lay buried, and the country immediately surrounding it. Enraptured with the sylvan scene, now suddenly invested in his eyes with untold charms, the Emperor immediately laid there the foundations of a magnificent royal residence; to beautify which, when completed, he robbed every other palace in his kingdom of its costliest treasures. Here Charlemagne took up his abode, and here it was he awaited his summons to another world. Day after day, the dying Emperor lingered, unable to burst the fetters of his earthly prison. The magic of the talisman kept fast hold upon his spirit, so that Death stayed his footsteps, and tarried on the threshold of his chamber. Not till the lake was dragged, and the charm returned to him, its rightful owner, was he permitted to breathe his last. The relic, fastened round his neck was buried with him, but in 997, Otto III. had the temerity to abstract the famous Talisman from his predecessor's tomb. For many years it was preserved at Aix-la-Chapelle, until the coming of that "second Charlemagne," as many styled Napoleon Buonaparte, to whom the authorities of the city, and its clergy, yielded up their treasure. By him it was presented to Queen Hortense, who left it to her son, the late Emperor of the French. Finally, "*la plus belle relique de l'Europe*," as Parisian journals have described it, was bequeathed to Prince Louis Napoléon.

In 1859 the mediæval collection of the Hôtel de Cluny was enriched by an addition to its antiquities of eight Gothic crowns, set with gems, which, literally enough, were unearthed by some peasants working near the river bed of La Fuente de Guarrazar, near Toledo. The whole treasure-trove included ten royal diadems, two of which bear respectively the names of Theodosius, and of Swinthila, a Gothic king of the 7th century. These, together with some other relics, are to be seen in the Museum at Madrid. By far the largest portion of this interesting "find" was carried off to Paris by a Frenchman



ANCIENT GOTHIC CROWN

who was staying in the neighbourhood of Toledo when the discovery was made. He found a ready purchaser in the Minister of Public Instruction, only too delighted to obtain for France such beautiful specimens of the antique. The circlets had evidently been hastily concealed during some period of invasion or internal strife, and remained hidden till "their memory even had passed away."

The largest crown bears the inscription, "*Reccesvinthus Rex offeret*," which proves it to have been a votive gift at some shrine, possibly in the church at Toledo, famous for the ministrations of the saintly Alonso, Abbot of Agaliense. Reccesvinthus governed Spain A.D. 653-675, and the other seven circlets, which vary in size, were probably worn by the wife and family of this Gothic king. The three smallest, from their minute circumference, and lighter framework, are only adapted to encircle childish brows. They are formed of golden hoops, intersected and united with cross-bars, adorned at each point with a precious stone.

The King's crown is extremely handsome, enriched with no less than sixty oriental pearls and sapphires, which



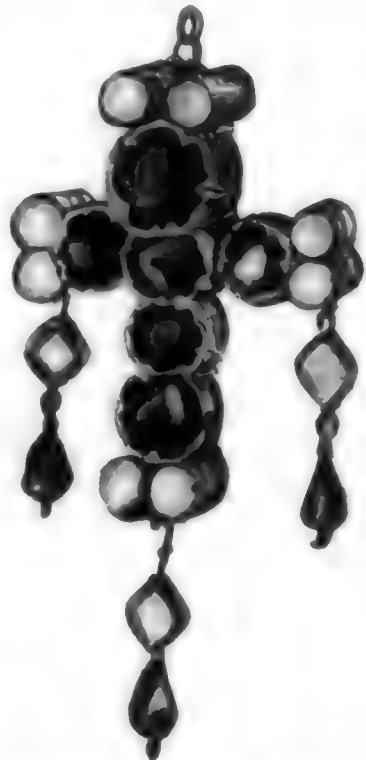
VOTIVE CROWN OF KING RECCESVINTHUS

alternate on a massive band of gold, each gem set in high relief in a separate collet. The margin of the circlet consists of two bands of cloisonné work, incrusting with cornelians. Fastened to its edge by little chains hang the letters forming the inscription, each about two inches in length, and having a pendant sapphire and pearl. Attached to the crown by a jewelled chain is a Latin cross set with six sapphires, and eight pearls in high relief. This was evidently worn as a brooch, for there are distinct traces of the acus, by which it was fastened. From each limb of the cross hangs a sapphire. Between the collets, the crown is wrought in pierced work, and engraved in flowers and foliage. Gold chains, united together at one end by a beautiful ornament of polished crystal, were attached, at a later date, to the upper margin of the crown, that the royal gift might be suspended before the shrine at which it was offered.

That the circlets were actually worn by their original possessors, is proved by little loops set round the edges of the diadem which in all probability belonged to the Queen of Reccesvinthus. These

held in place a soft lining of silk or tissue, which prevented the heavy gold band from chafing the brow of its wearer. Though not quite so elaborate as the diadem of her royal spouse, the Queen's crown is nevertheless of great beauty, set with fifty-four stones of varied hue—sapphires, emeralds, opals, and rubies. From its margin hangs a fringe of oriental sapphires, and the same beautiful stones adorn both sides of the pendant cross, Latin in form, like the King's. To its upper edge also are fastened gold chains, united at the top by a foliated ornament, surmounted by a ring. As in the case of the crown just described above, these additions were made on that solemn occasion of intercession or thanksgiving for protection in time of peril and need.

Another diadem, more celebrated by far than those just mentioned, and also a votive offering, is Italy's Iron Crown, used in ancient days at the coronation of the Frankish Kings of Lombardy. It consists of a broad band of gold, resembling the Alfred Jewel in the style of its workmanship, and is set with magnificent emeralds, rubies and sapphires, on a ground of blue and gold enamel. Inside the crown is the narrow hoop of



GOLD CROSS OF A KING OF THE GOTHs

iron, not quite half an inch in breadth, from which it derives its name. This metal band was made, so says tradition, out of one of the nails used at the Crucifixion, and presented by the Empress Helena to Constantine — a charm to avert the dangers of the battlefield. The ecclesiastics to whose care the crown is entrusted, point out as a special miracle the fact that not a speck of rust can be detected on this iron circlet, though fully thirteen centuries have rolled by since the diadem was placed upon the head of Agilulfus. Its early possessors attached to the crown the sacramental words "Dio me l'ha dater, guai a chi la toccherra," and deposited the sacred relic in the Cathedral at Monza, which was built

by Theodolinda, wife of the Norman King.

When Napoleon Buonaparte was proclaimed King of Italy, the famous Iron Crown was taken to Milan. On the 26th of May, 1805, with his own hand the conqueror lifted the diadem on to his head, repeating, as he did so, its haughty motto, "God has given it to me, beware who would touch it." Yet even he, whose name, for a space, struck terror into Europe, whose mighty armies at one time seemed invincible, has

long since passed away, whilst this silent, but important factor in a day's pageant may last through another decade of centuries, perchance to lend again and often, its jewelled glory to symbolise the greatness of a King.



THE IRON CROWN OF ITALY



The Fools Love Story



WRITTEN BY RAFAEL SABATINI. ILLUSTRATED BY SPENCER BLYTH

CHAPTER I.

KUONI VON STOCKEN, the Hofknarr of Sachsenberg, heaves a weary sigh and a strange, half-sad, half-scornful expression sits upon his lean sardonic countenance, as, turning his back to the gay crowd of courtiers that fills the Ballroom of the Palace of Schwerlingen, he passes out on to the balcony, and bends his glance upon the sleeping town below.

Resting his elbows upon the cool stone and his chin upon his hands, he may breathe the free, unpolluted air of heaven, out here; he may permit his face to assume what expression it lists; in a word, he may rest—if rest there be for one whose soul is full of bitterness and gall, whose heart is well-nigh bursting with the hopeless passion it conceals.

He is sadly changed of late, this nimble-witted fool! Time was when his jests were bright and merry and

wounded none save the arrogant and vain who deserved no better; but now, alas! he has grown morose and moody, and moves, listless and silent, deep in strange musings from which he but awakens at times, to give vent to such bursts of ghastly and even blasphemous mirth, as make men shudder and women cross themselves, deeming him possessed of devils.

His tongue, from which the bright and sparkling *bon-mots* were once listened to with avidity, is now compared, not inadequately, with the fangs of some poisonous snake. And many who have felt its stinging sarcasms, pray devoutly that his Majesty may soon deem fit to look about him for a new jester.

The young French nobleman, the Marquis de Savignon, in the honour of whose *fiançailles* with the lady Louisa von Lichtenau, to-night's *fête* is held, seems to have become in particular the butt for the jester's most biting gibes.

This the Court thinks strange, for the young Frenchman has ever treated Kuoni kindly.

What is amiss? Some swear that he is growing old; but that is untrue, for he is scarce thirty years of age and in point of strength and agility—though but a jester—he has no equal in the army of Sachsenberg. Others jestingly whisper that he is in love, and little do they dream how near the truth they are!

Alas! poor Kuoni! For ten years he has gloried in his suit of motley, but now of a sudden he seems to grow ashamed of his quaint black tunic with its cap and bells and pointed cape, and in his secret shame, at times he hangs his head; at times he curses bitterly to himself the fate which has made him the sport of courtiers, and which seems to forget that he is human, and that he has a heart.

As he stands upon the balcony, gazing aimlessly now up into the starlit summer sky, now down upon the sleeping city of Schwerlingen, his long, lithe figure bathed in a flood of light from the window behind him and his ears assailed by sounds of music and of revelry, the wretched jester feels—as he has never felt until to-night—the bitter ignominy of his position. In an agony rendered all the more terrible by the despair that fills his soul, he flings himself down upon a stone seat in a corner, and covers his face with his hands. Thus he sits for some few moments, his vigorous frame shaken by a fierce sobbing which no tears come to relieve, until a step close at hand bids him make an effort to overcome his emotion.

The tall, slim figure of a girl stands for a moment framed in the open casement, and as, raising his eyes, Kuoni beholds her, he springs suddenly to his feet and turns his pale countenance towards her, so that the light from the room beyond falls full upon it, revealing clearly the signs of the storm of agony that has swept across the jester's soul.

An exclamation of wonder escapes the girl at the sight of that distorted face.

"Kuoni!" she cries, coming forward, "what is amiss? Have you seen a ghost?"

"Aye, Madame," he answers, in

accents full of bitter, bitter sadness, "I have indeed seen a ghost—the ghost of happiness."

"And is the sight then so distressing as your face and tone would tell me? Why, I should have deemed it otherwise."

"Yes, were it tangible, attainable happiness that I had beheld; but I said the ghost of happiness—in other words, the reflection of the joys of others—a shadow well calculated to strike despair into the hearts of those wretches who may not grasp the substance."

"And are you one of those wretches, Kuoni?" enquires the girl, her tone full of an interest and sympathy such as a wise man might have misconstrued but which the fool does not. "Why, 'tis said," she continues, "that a jester's is a gay and careless life. I have even heard it said by some of those fine gentlemen yonder that it gave rise to envy in them."

"I doubt it not, I doubt it not," he answers with a laugh of scorn, "and I dare swear there are many of them whom a fool's cap would fit better than it does me!"

Then abruptly changing his tone and becoming earnest—

"Fraulein von Lichtenau," he says, scarce above a whisper, "this *fête* to-night is given in honour of your betrothal; will you deign to accept a poor jester's deepest, sincerest wishes for your happiness."

There is something so strange and curious in his tone that the girl feels herself unaccountably moved by it.

"I accept them and thank you, friend Kuoni, with all my heart," she answers kindly, giving him her hand.

"You call me friend Kuoni," he cries, drawing a step nearer. "You call the poor fool, *friend*! May God bless you for that word!"

"Kuoni! Kuoni!" comes a voice from within; but he heeds it not as, stooping, he raises her hand to his lips and kisses the slender fingers, as one might kiss a sacred relic.

"May God bless you, Madame, and if ever it should be your lot to need a friend, I swear it, by the Mass, that he whom you now honour with that proud title will be at hand."

Then, tearing himself away before she has time to answer, he enters the *salon*.

"Kuoni! Kuoni! Where are you?" cry a dozen voices.

"I am here," he answers sourly; "what is amiss? Are there not fools enough assembled in one room, but that you must clamour for me to swell your number?"

He has worn a mask too long to forget

of ready tongue? Silent! All silent—for they know the jester's virulence too well to expose themselves to its venom in open Court.

It is the *débonnaire* young foreigner, the Marquis de Savignon, who is rash enough to cross weapons with him.

"They tell me, Kuoni," he remarks with a complacent laugh, and in excellent German tainted but slightly by a foreign



"STOOPING, HE RAISED HER HAND TO HIS LIPS"

the part he plays in life, and as he stands now before them, all traces of his late emotion have disappeared from his face, albeit the natural expression, half-melancholic, half-scornful, remains.

With his dark eyes he sweeps the glittering throng of Court beauties and gay gallants waiting for some one to take up his challenge.

Where are Felsheim, Altenburg, Briedewald, and the other witty triflers

accent, "that you are thinking of abandoning the motley and turning courtier instead."

"That were easy," answers the jester with a shrug, "for 'twixt fool and courtier there lies but a difference of designation."

"Aye, aye," goes on de Savignon, "but ponder for a moment, my prince of fools, and think of what would become of Sachsenberg in your absence. His

Majesty will never find such another fool!"

"Not unless he appoints you my successor," is the cool, sharp answer, whereat a titter arises among those who stand about, which makes the vain Frenchman turn pale with anger.

"You seem to forget, master fool," he says harshly, "that you are addressing the Marquis de Savignon and not bandying words with a fellow-clown!"

He has wounded the jester more deeply than he imagines, and Kuoni's proud spirit writhes and swells within him 'neath the stinging lash of the Marquis' scornful words, which remind him anew of the gulf that lies between their social positions. But naught of this is visible on his face, over which a bland, indulgent smile is softly spreading.

Only those who are well acquainted with him notice the slight compression of his thin lips, which, to them, forebodes a cutting retort.

His head on one side and his hand on his chin, he regards de Savignon for a moment through lids half closed, as it were, in languor. Then, slowly and almost wearily, he makes answer:

"Nay, Monsieur de Savignon, forgetfulness, methinks, lies more with your family than mine. Was it not you yourself, my lord, who, whilst at the siege of La Rochelle—so the story goes—one day when the Rochellais made a fierce *sortie*, forgot where the battle was being fought? So that in your absent-mindedness you galloped madly south, and by nightfall you were found at Royan, a good ten leagues from the scene of action."

It is de Savignon's turn to tremble now, and as a great burst of laughter greets the jester's sally, his complexion is of a greyish tint and his teeth are clenched in anger, noting which, Kuoni continues pitilessly:

"Do you not see the humour of it, my lord? Why look so glum? Bah! You weary me; there is no more wit in your soul than milk in an oyster!"

And with an easy laugh which contains almost a ring of contempt, the jester moves away to let others feel the sting of his tongue, from which none, save the King, are sacred.

For a moment, the Frenchman follows

the tall symmetrical figure with his eyes, then, deeming it best to affect unconcern, he shrugs his shoulders and, giving vent to a mirthless laugh, passes out on to the balcony to seek balm for his wounded spirit at the hands of his betrothed.

CHAPTER II.

During the weeks that follow upon the night of the *fête* whereat Kuoni von Stocken so signally insulted the Marquis de Savignon, these two men are careful to shun each other's presence.

The proud and vain French cavalier is not likely to forget the humiliation to which he has been subjected, and the memory of it is wont to make his fingers close over the jewelled hilt of his toy dagger and black vows of vengeance arise in his heart, fostering the hatred in which he holds the jester.

But it is not *his* dagger alone that is ready to do murder. Ugly thoughts are running in Kuoni's mind, and one night when de Savignon sits, easy in spirit for the while, telling the lady Louisa something that he has already recited to her upon several former occasions, he little dreams that from the curtains at his back two great lustrous eyes are watching them, and that a nervous hand is gripping a keen Italian blade. Did he but know how near at hand is death, his laugh would be less gay, his manner less unconcerned, his mind less easy. But he knows naught of this, and some angel must be watching over him, for the armed hand, uplifted in menace, does not descend, the jester sheathes his poniard and departs noiselessly the way he came.

But as the weeks go swiftly by and the nuptials of the marquis are fast approaching, the strange and unaccountable moodiness of the whilom lighthearted jester grows more and more accentuated. Each day he seems to grow visibly thinner, as if some fell disease were gnawing at his vitals and slowly sapping his life and strength. Each day his pale cheeks appear paler and under his eyes there are deep black circles, suggestive of pain and suffering and sleepless nights.

A more wretched, woe-begone picture than the poor fool presents, when none



"A NERVOUS HAND IS GRIPPING A KEEN ITALIAN BLADE"

are by to spy upon his feelings, it were difficult to conceive.

Meanwhile, however, there are other and graver matters to be considered in the kingdom of Sachsenberg than the secret agony of a lovesick jester. Rumours are abroad of a conspiracy to overthrow the Sonsbeck dynasty, organised, it is said, by many great lords, tired of their young King, Ludwig IV., who seems overmuch engrossed in imitating the vices of the Court of his French cousin to pay great heed to matters of state and the welfare of his people.

'Tis a weakness not uncommon to kings, especially young ones, for monarchs are but ordinary folk when stripped of their purple. Ludwig, however, is blessed with a character which, in some matters, is as firm and earnest as it is weak and frivolous in others; moreover, he is doubly blessed in the

possession of an astute and far-seeing servant in the person of the Ritter Heinrich von Grunhain, the Captain of his Guards.

He has been forced to listen to the grave things which this gentleman has to relate, concerning the dissatisfaction of some of the nobles who are zealously inciting the people to open rebellion, and a drastic line of action has been drawn up.

The King is seated in his cabinet one night, about a month after the *fête* dealt with in the preceding chapter, and a week before the day appointed for the wedding of the lady Louisa von Lichtenau.

Around the table five men are grouped; two are old and faithful servants of the late king, his father—the Duke of Ottrau and the Count von Horst; two are men still in the prime of life, Ritter von Grunhain, the Captain of his Guards, and Herr von Retzbach, his Minister; whilst the fifth is none other than the gay young Lord von Ronshausen, his favourite.

There is a solemn and anxious look upon the faces of these six men, for it is being decided that upon that very night Sachsenberg shall tear a gruesome page from the history of France—there is to be a parody of the St. Bartholomée in Schwerlingen before sunrise.

"It is better thus, my lords," says the King, and although his face is pale and haggard, his voice is calm; "for were we to publish the matter, and give the traitors open trial, who knows what might ensue? Men are ever ready to revolt against those who rule them, and who can say but that the trial of these rebels would swell the ranks of the disloyal—for treason is an infectious malady—and prove the signal for open revolt? As it is, when the news goes round, tomorrow, that ten noble lords have been found murdered in their beds, there will be much marvelling and much surmising

—also, maybe, some grief—but those who have listened to the doctrines of these ten, and sharpened their weapons in anticipation of a fray, will understand, and will be stricken with terror at the awful fate which has overtaken their leaders. Believe me, gentlemen, they will be silent and they will disperse.”

“Will not your Majesty consider—” began the grey-haired Duke of Ottrau; but the King cut him short.

“I have considered, my lords, and I have *decided*. What matters the manner of these men’s death? They have richly earned their fate, and if they were openly tried they could not escape the scaffold—so what difference does it make whether it be the dagger or the axe? None to them, but much to me.”

The tone is too determined to permit of further argument. It but remains for Grunhain to receive his Majesty’s instructions.

“Here is the list, Captain,” the King continues, taking a paper from the table. “I will read out the names of those whom we have sentenced: Kervenheim von Huld, Nienberge, Blankenburg, Eberholz, Retzwald, Leubnitz, Hartenstein, Reussbach, and the French Marquis de Savignon.”

“Concerning that last one, Sire,” ventures Ronshausen, the favourite, “has your Majesty remembered that he is a subject of the King of France?”

“I have,” answers Ludwig, “and I have also remembered that he—a foreigner to whom I have ever shown great favour and consideration, and who, were he to live, would wed one of the noblest ladies of my Court—coupled ingratitude with his treason. No doubt he whom they intend to set up in my stead has bribed him richly; but he shall pay for his folly, as others are paying for theirs, with his life: and I fail to see how I am to be made accountable to the King of France for the chance assassination of a subject of his, in my capital. The matter is settled, gentlemen; Ritter von Grunhain knows how to see to its execution. There is no more to be said,” he goes on, rising, “but when you hear midnight striking in the belfry of St. Oswald, say a prayer, gentlemen, for the repose of the souls of ten traitors

whose knell it will be sounding. And now, let us join the Court.”

One by one, they pass out after the King, and then, when the door has closed upon the last of them, a head peeps forth from the rich damask drapery that curtains one of the windows, and a pair of dark eyes hastily survey the room: the next instant the curtains are parted and Kuoni von Stocken steps forth.

There is a look of fierce, almost fiendish exultation on his swart face, and the low mocking laugh that bursts from his thin lips can be likened to nothing save the chuckle of the Tempter in his hour of victory.

“So, my lord of Savignon, you have been meddling in politics, eh?” he murmurs, rubbing his lean, nervous hands together; “and to-night you die. Fool! Arch-fool! That you should be well-born, rich, high in favour at the Courts of France and Sachsenberg alike, did not suffice your greed, but you must wish to become a moulder of history besides, and like many another such before you, you have destroyed yourself! Oh, what a thing is man! Faugh!”

And with a sneer of contempt for the whole human race in general and the Marquis de Savignon in particular, Kuoni flings himself into the chair lately occupied by the King.

“To think,” he goes on, “that a man about to become the husband of such a woman as the lady Louisa von Lichtenau should trifle and fence with death! By the Mass, Sire,” he cries, raising his long arm and speaking as if the King were there to hear him, “slay him not! Spare him and clothe him in my suit of motley; he is too marvellous a fool to die!”

Then, of a sudden, the mocking smile fades from his face, to be replaced by a grave, sad look, as the thought occurs to him: “What will the lady Louisa think to-morrow, when the news is carried to her? How will she bear it?”

That she loves de Savignon with all her heart and soul the jester knows full well, and as he thinks of it he grinds his teeth and drives his nails into the palms of his clenched hands.

His imagination pictures her as she will be to-morrow, and into his soul there comes a great overwhelming wave of

sorrow and of pity for her, which cleanses and purifies it of the sinful joy which it harboured but a moment back. "She will pine away and die of it," he tells himself, "even as I am pining and dying for love of her! Alas! poor Louisa!" And he sighs heavily and sorrowfully. Then resting his chin upon his hands and his elbows on his knees, he sits there deep in thought, his eyes bent upon the floor.

And thus he sits on for nigh upon an hour, thinking strange thoughts in a strange manner, and revolving in his mind a strange resolve. At last, chancing to raise his eyes, his glance alights upon the gold and ivory time-piece. The sight rouses him, for springing suddenly to his feet—

"Himmel!" he cries. "It wants but half-an-hour to midnight—to the sounding of his knell."

He pauses for a moment, undecided, then walks swiftly towards the door and disappears.

CHAPTER III.

Now it chanced that, owing to a fire which had, a few days before, destroyed the Palais Savignon, in the Klosterstrasse, the marquis found himself the guest of his future father-in-law, the Graf von Lichtenau.

Upon the night in question—which a scarlet page of the Chronicles of Sachsenberg tells us was that of the 12th of August of 1635—de Savignon had retired to the room set apart in his suite as his bedchamber, just as eleven was striking.

Feeling himself as yet wakeful, the Frenchman, whose mood is naturally a poetic one, takes down a French translation of the Odyssey, and, flinging himself into a luxurious chair, is soon lost in the adventures of Ulysses on the Island of Calypso. His heart is full of sympathy for the demi-goddess and of contempt for the King of Ithaca, when a rustling of the window-curtains brings him back to Sachsenberg and his surroundings, with a start. Glancing up, he beholds a dark shadow in the casement, and before he can so much as move a finger a man has sprung into the room, and Kuoni von Stocken stands before him with a strange look upon his face.

Imagining that the visit has no friendly

purport, the Marquis draws a dagger from his belt, whereat the shadow of a smile flits across the jester's solemn countenance.

"Put up your weapon, Monsieur de Savignon," he says calmly, "I am no assassin, but there are others coming after me who deserve the title."

"What do you mean?" enquires the Marquis haughtily.

"I bring you news, Monsieur," replies Kuoni, sinking his voice to a whisper, "that the plot to overthrow the Sonsbeck dynasty is discovered."

The Frenchman bounds from his chair as if someone had prodded him with a dagger.

"You lie!" he shrieks.

"Do I?" answers the other indifferently, "then if it is not yet discovered, how comes it that I am acquainted with it?"

Then, as if blind to Savignon's agitation, he goes on in the same deliberate accents.

"I also bring you news that his Majesty is possessed of a list of the names of the principal leaders; that your name figures upon that list, and that it is the King's good pleasure that when midnight strikes from St. Oswald it will announce to ten gentleman that their last hour on earth is spent; for into the room of each there will penetrate three executioners to carry out the death-sentence which was passed upon them without trial, two hours ago, by the King."

The Frenchman is too dazed to reply for a moment; he drops back into his chair, his cheeks blanched with terror and his eyes staring wildly at the jester. The matter is too grave, Kuoni's manner too impressive, to leave any doubts as to the accuracy of his statement.

"And are *you* one of the three assassins to whom my end has been entrusted?" says de Savignon at length, a gleam of hatred in his eye and the memory of his feud with the jester in his mind.

"No," replies Kuoni simply.

"Then why are you here?" the other cries vehemently. "Why? Answer me! Have you come to gloat over my end?"

"I have come to make an attempt to save you," is the cold, proud answer.

"To save me? Did I hear you aright?"

"Aye, to save you. But come, my lord, there is not a moment to lose if I am to be successful. Off with your doublet. Quick!"

And as the Marquis mechanically proceeds to obey him, the jester goes on:

"In front of the Rathhaus, at the corner of the Klosterstrasse, you will find a carriage in waiting. Enter it without speaking; the driver has received his instructions and will convey you to the village of Lossnitz, three leagues from here. There is a suit of clothes in the coach, which you will do well to don. When you stop at the hostelry of the Schwarzen Hirsch, you will find a horse ready for you; turn its head towards the frontier; by sunrise you will be a good fifteen leagues from Schwerlingen, and beyond King Ludwig's reach when he discovers that you have not died; whilst to-morrow night, if you ride well, you should sleep in France. Come, take my coat." And, advancing, Kuoni holds out his long black tunic, which he has removed whilst speaking.

The livery of motley makes the Frenchman pause, and a suspicion flashes across his mind.

"This is not one of your jests, sir fool?"

"If you doubt me," cries Kuoni, with an impatient gesture, "wait and see."

"No, no, Kuoni, I believe you," he exclaims, "but why is this necessary?"

"Why?" echoes the other. "Oh thou far-seeing sage! What would the coachman who is to drive you think, did he behold a cavalier return in my stead? Besides, what if you chanced upon your assassins between this and the Rathhaus? Do you not see how my cap and bells would serve you?"

"True, true," murmurs the other.

"Then waste no more time; it wants but a few minutes to midnight now. Come, on with it!"

Savignon wriggles into the black velvet tunic and Kuoni draws the hood, surmounted by the cock's comb, well over his head, so that it conceals his features, then, standing back to judge the effect:

"By the Mass!" he ejaculates with a grim laugh, "how well it becomes you!"

Did I not always say it would! Here, take my bauble as well, and there you stand as thorough a fool as ever strutted in a Royal anteroom. Who would have thought it? de Savignon turned fool and Kuoni turned courtier! Ha! ha! 'tis a merry jest, a jest of that prince of jesters—Death!"

"Your merriment is out of season," grumbles the Marquis.

"And so is your chocolate hose with that tunic; but it matters not, 'tis all a part of this colossal jest."

Then growing serious of a sudden:

"Are you ready? Then follow me; I will set you on your way."

Opening the door, the jester leads the nobleman, silently and with stealthy tread, out of his chamber and down the broad oak staircase.

He pauses by the wainscot, in the spacious hall below, and after searching for a few seconds, he alights upon a spring—which, fortunately, he knows of old. A panel slides back and reveals an opening through which he conducts the Frenchman.

They emerge presently into a courtyard at the back of the mansion, and through a small postern they pass out into the street.

Here they pause for a moment; it is commencing to rain; the sky is overcast and the night is inky black.

"Yonder lies your road," says Kuoni; "at the corner you will find the coach. Do as I told you, and may God speed you. Farewell!"

"But you?" exclaims de Savignon, a thought for the jester's safety arising at last in his mind; "are you not coming?"

"I cannot. I must return to impersonate you and receive your visitors, for, did they find you gone, the pursuit would commence before you were clear of the city, and you would, of a certainty, be taken."

"But you will be in danger!"

"Have no concern on that score," is the reply, delivered in grim accents.

"But——"

"Enough of *buts*; begone before midnight strikes, or, by the Mass, your stay in Schwerlingen will be unpleasantly prolonged. Farewell!"

And, stepping back, the jester slams

the door and de Savignon is left alone, shivering with cold. For a moment the idea again occurs to him that he is being victimised by Kuoni. But he remembers that were the plot undiscovered the jester would scarcely be in possession of the secret.

Next he begins to marvel why Kuoni should evince such solicitude for his escape and for his life, after having always shown himself so bitter an enemy in the past. However, fear overcomes his doubts; so, swearing that if the fool has duped him he will return, if it be only to wring his neck, he sets off briskly in the direction indicated.

Meanwhile, Kuoni has retraced his steps to the Frenchman's bedchamber; stripped out in de Savignon's clothes and with de Savignon's hat drawn well over his brows, so as to shade his face, he flings himself into the chair lately occupied by the Marquis—and waits.

Presently the deep-toned bell of St. Oswald's chimes out the hour of midnight; scarce has the vibration of the last stroke died away on the silent night air, when his ear detects another and nearer sound.

He springs up, and turning finds himself confronted by three masked men, standing, sword in hand, by the open window through which they have entered. In an instant he has drawn de Savignon's rapier from its scabbard.

"How now, my masters," he exclaims, mimicking the Frenchman's foreign accent, "what do you seek?"

"The Marquis Henri de Savignon" says one, in a voice which the jester does not recognise.

"I am he," he replies haughtily; "what is your business? Are you robbers or assassins, that you come in this guise and penetrate at such an hour into my bedchamber?"

"We bear you news," says the former speaker, delivering the words after the fashion of a man who is reciting a lesson that he has learnt by heart, "we bear you news that your treason is discovered, and in the King's name we bid you prepare to die."

"A merry jest, gentlemen! An artful story! You are certainly no common footpads, but I fear me there is some slight mistake."

"I give you five minutes, by yonder time-piece, wherein to prepare your soul for the next world."

"It is considerate of you, my masters," retorts Kuoni, the mocking spirit of the jester asserting itself, "but the boon is unrequested, and, by your leave, I trust to have many years yet wherein to carry out your amiable suggestion."

"The man is laughing at us," cries one of the hitherto silent assassins. "Let us end the business!"

His companions seek to detain him, but, going forward in spite of them, he crosses swords with Kuoni.

Seeing him engaged, the other two come forward also, and in a few minutes a terrible fight is raging. There is not, perhaps, in the whole of Sachsenberg, a finer swordsman than this lithe and agile jester, but the odds are such as no man may hope to strive against victoriously. Before many minutes have elapsed, one of the assassins' swords has passed through his right breast.

With a groan he sinks forward in a heap, and the sword he lately held bounds with a noisy ring upon the parquet floor.

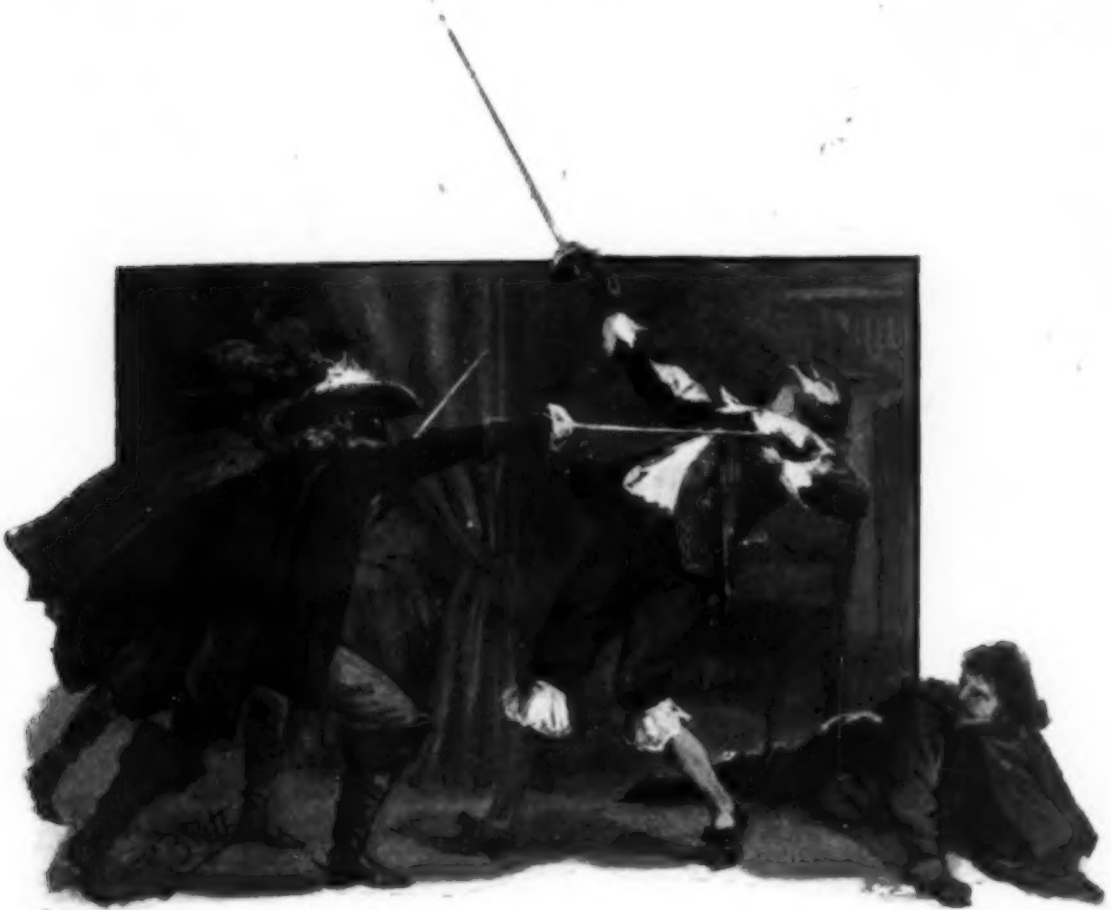
Hurrying steps are heard outside the room, and presently voices are discernible, as the household, disturbed by the clash of steel and the din of struggle, is hurrying towards De Savignon's room.

One of the assassins is on the point of going forward to make sure of their work, by driving his dagger into the heart of the prostrate man, when, alarmed by the approaching sounds and mindful of their orders not to allow themselves on any account to be taken, the other two drag him off through the window before he can accomplish his design.

"Come," says he who delivered the fatal blow, "he will be dead in a few minutes. That stroke never yet left a man alive."

An instant later the door of the room is burst violently open, and just as the murderers disappear into the night a curious group of half-clad men and women with frightened faces stand awe-stricken on the threshold, gazing at the spectacle before them.

"The Marquis has been slain," cries a voice, which is followed by a woman's



"ONE OF THE ASSASSINS' SWORDS HAS PASSED THROUGH HIS BREAST"

shriek, and as the crowd divides, the old, white-haired Count of Lichtenau enters the room followed by his half-fainting daughter.

Together they stand gazing at the body on the floor, and at the dark crimson stain which is slowly spreading about it.

Then suddenly——

"Henri!" shrieks the girl, and rushing forward, she falls on her knees beside the unconscious Kuoni. Then, as her father gently turns the body over to ascertain the nature of his hurt, another and different cry escapes her. But the jester reviving, and opening his eyes at the sound, meets her gaze and whispers faintly——

"Hush, my lady! do not say that I am not the Marquis. As you value his life, keep silent and let all believe and spread the report that the Marquis is dying."

"What does it mean? what does it mean?" she wails, wringing her hands,

yet, with quick instinct, understanding that serious motives have dictated Kuoni's words.

"Send them away—your father also—I will explain," gasps the jester, and at each word he utters the blood wells forth from his wound.

When all have withdrawn, and when she has raised his head and pillowed it in her lap, he tells her *all*, bidding her not to allow the real truth of the matter to transpire until morning.

"And you, YOU, Kuoni, of all men, who have ever seemed to hate him, you have so nobly given your life to buy his safety!" she exclaims.

"No, my lady, I have not," he answers; "I have given my life not for him but for you. I wished to save him because you loved him. And because I wished to spare you the anguish of beholding his dead body, I have changed places with him. *His* life is valuable to some one—mine is worthless."

The girl can find no words wherein to

answer fittingly, but her tears are falling fast and they are eloquent to him. She *understands* at last !

"I am so happy," he murmurs presently, "oh, so happy ! Had I lived my head would never have been pillowed on your knee. Had I lived, I should never have dared to tell you—as I do now, when in the presence of death all differences of birth and station fade away—that I love you."

The girl trembles violently ; then for a second their eyes meet. She were not a woman did her heart not swell with fondness and pity for the poor despised fool, who to ensure her happiness has sacrificed his life.

Growing bold in the dread presence of the Reaper—

"Louisa," he gasps, his voice still fainter than before, "I am dying ; there are none to witness, and none will ever know—kiss me !"

Weeping softly, the girl stoops until her loose flowing hair falls about his head and neck, and her lips, so rich with the blood of life and youth, touch *his*, upon which the chill of death is settling.

A quiver runs through his frame, his chest heaves with a long last sigh—then all is still, but for the gentle sobbing of the girl whose tears are falling fast upon the upturned face, which smiles upon her in death.

